

*“RAISING THE BAR”*

A STRATEGIC PLAN  
FOR A  
BETTER ECONOMY AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY

The Greensboro Partnership  
January 2006

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## MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Former Greensboro City Manager, Vice President, Bryan Foundation

Priscilla P. Taylor, Vice-Chair

Executive Director, Cemala Foundation

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Kay Cashion, Commissioner, Guilford County Commission

Douglas W. Copeland, Jr., President, The Business Journal

Keith G. Debbage, Professor, Department of Geography, UNCG

Parker O. Huitt, CEO, Huitt Investment Properties

J. Lee Lloyd, Attorney, Brooks Pierce McLendon Humphrey & Leonard

H. Nolo Martinez, Assistant Director, Research & Outreach  
UNCG Center for New North Carolinians

Tom May, President, Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship

Kenneth C. Mayer, Jr., Principal, Moser Mayer Phoenix Associates, PA

John R. Merrill, Executive Director, Greensboro Center for Innovative  
Development

Lillian Plummer, Executive Director, Workforce Development Board

D. Marsh Prause, Greensboro Neighborhood Congress

N. Radhakrishnan, Interim Vice Chancellor, Research, NC A&T State University

Marlene Sanford, President, TREBIC

Lane Schiffman, Owner, Schiffman's

Ralph K. Shelton, Owner, Southeast Fuels, Inc.

Doug Speight, Director, Office of Technology Transfer, NC A&T State University

Marshall "Sonny" White, Executive Vice President, Guilford Technical  
Community College

Terrence O. Young, Chief Information Officer, Guilford County Schools

GREENSBORO PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE  
Staff & Resource Personnel

Staff:

Helen Cauthen, Vice President, Retention & Expansion Services, GEDP  
 J. David Jameson, President & CEO, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce  
 Dan Lynch, Senior Vice President, Greensboro Economic Development Partnership  
 Judy Morton, Office & Communications Manager, Action Greensboro  
 Susan S. Schwartz, Executive Director, Action Greensboro  
 John Shoffner, Program Manager, Economic Development, City of Greensboro

Facilitation:

Jay Wenberg, Vice President- Management Development, Jefferson - Pilot  
 David Wright, Human Resources, Jefferson - Pilot

Other Resource People Participating:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Jim Arnold             | Apex Analytix                                  |
| Rob Bencini            | Guilford County                                |
| Lisa Blakley           | Piedmont Triad Entrepreneurial Network         |
| Ginger Booker          | Piedmont Council of Governments                |
| Helen Cauthen          | Greensboro Economic Development Partnership    |
| Louis DeJoy            | New Breed Corporation                          |
| Kathy Elliott          | Greensboro Chamber of Commerce                 |
| Lou Anne Flanders-Stec | Piedmont Angel Network                         |
| Sam Funches            | Rule Radio                                     |
| Perry Gant             | Source Horizon                                 |
| Monty Hagler           | Trone Public Relations                         |
| Tim Janke              | Small Business & Technology Development Center |
| Lori Jarrett           | VirtuosoWorks                                  |
| John Lomax             | Lomax Construction                             |
| Sherri Lyster          | Renea Myers Marketing                          |
| Troy McConnell         | Batanga, Inc.                                  |
| Thaddeus McEwen        | NC A&T State University                        |
| Jerry McGuire          | UNCG   |
| Bob Morgan             | City of Greensboro                             |
| Pat Nugent             | AdColor  |
| Andy Scott             | City of Greensboro                             |
| Brian Self             | Source Horizon                                 |
| Lanty Smith            | Soles Brower Smith & Company                   |
| Ed Uprichard           | UNCG   |
| JoAnne Vernon          | marketing strategist                           |
| Rosemary Wander        | UNCG   |
| Jim Weeks              | UNCG, Bryan School of Business                 |
| Jim Westmoreland       | City of Greensboro                             |

## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly global, fast changing economy, no community can fully control its economic destiny. There are no “silver bullets” that will answer all of the economic challenges facing Greensboro and Guilford County. But an opportunistic and optimistic community can capitalize on its inherent strengths and position itself to take favorable advantage of changes in the economic environment. Greensboro and Guilford County are at an economic crossroads and must act decisively now to seize those opportunities. This strategic plan for economic development is designed to help us do so.

### HISTORY OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Over the last six to eight years, numerous studies of Greensboro’s (and the Triad’s) economy have been conducted. While there has been some very positive follow-up action (downtown development, improvements to water capacity, enhanced growth management, and a major step toward improved organizational structure), much more needs to be done – and done quickly. In 2000, a group of community foundations commissioned McKinsey & Co. to assess Greensboro’s future economic prospects. Among the barriers to positive economic development identified by McKinsey was the “divergent development priorities and dispersed efforts” of what was referred to as an “alphabet soup” of economic development agencies. In late 2004, three key organizations – the Chamber of Commerce, Action Greensboro, and the Economic Development Partnership – were merged with a goal of streamlined governance, speaking with one voice and more focused strategic planning. In spring 2005, a committee was appointed to develop the strategic plan. The plan outlined herein is a recommended blueprint to enhance the new agency’s work, and for a better economy for Greensboro’s and Guilford County’s future.

### RAISING THE BAR ON THE PARTNERHSHIP’S PERFORMANCE

This plan focuses on new areas of emphasis and doing some things differently to adjust to changing conditions. It is critical, however, to recognize that many productive economic development activities are currently being performed and will need continued emphasis. An example is the area of recruitment and retention of business. Although this plan recommends a new targeted industry cluster focus, efforts must continue to respond effectively to any opportunities for new jobs. Another example involves support of small business. While the plan advocates strongly for new and additional support for “high growth” entrepreneurial companies, support of existing small businesses that could be classified as “stable” needs to be continued. That said, the plan calls for realignment of focus and resources. Quite simply, the world we operate in is changing far too much and too quickly to keep doing things the same way. In implementing this plan, it will be critical that the Board, its CEO and professional staff carefully balance the need for change with sustaining current positive efforts. There are some very positive features to Greensboro’s economic development “baby” - but the “bathwater” needs to be kept fresh to keep that baby healthy and growing.

## SIX (6) AREAS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR NEW INITIATIVES

After approximately eight months of hard work, the Strategic Planning Committee has compiled a plan which embraces six new initiatives which we believe will lead to a stronger economy and more vibrant community. Each should contribute positively to a climate which fosters the maintenance and creation of good jobs.

Briefly, the six new initiatives are:

***SUPPLEMENT CURRENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION ACTIVITIES WITH TARGETED ACTIONS FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC INDUSTRY CLUSTERS, WHERE GREENSBORO CAN CREATE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN JOB GROWTH.***

***GREATLY INCREASE EMPHASIS ON SUPPORT OF “HIGH IMPACT, HIGH GROWTH” ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES.***

***QUICKLY ASSEMBLE LARGE TRACTS OF DEVELOPMENT-READY LAND FOR OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL USES AND INITIATE A LONG RANGE STRATEGY FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF STRUGGLING BUSINESS CORRIDORS.***

***ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND OUR COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES IN ORDER TO BETTER CAPITALIZE ON OUR ABUNDANT HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES.***

***SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE LOBBYING EFFORTS AT STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS AND DEVELOP ENHANCED RELATIONS WITH LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS.***

***PARTNER WITH OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY TO BUILD OUR COMMUNITY SPIRIT, IMAGE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.***

## THE ISSUE OF REGIONALISM

A logical question to be asked about this plan is what relationship it has to regional economic development efforts. Our thoughts on this issue are outlined in Appendix A at the end of this plan. We recommend that the Partnership focus on the initiatives in this plan at the Greensboro/Guilford County level, but maintain active participation in any efforts to foster regional approaches and cooperation. In fact, implementation of several of the initiatives should be coordinated on a regional basis if possible. The “Heart of the Triad” effort presents a good opportunity to pursue new models of partnership and should be enthusiastically pursued. The Partnership should also continue to foster regional relationships to the east – particularly along the high potential I85/US70 corridor. In addition, the Partnership should encourage intergovernmental cooperation on major infrastructure and public services such as solid waste disposal, water and sewer, land use planning, and environmental issues (air and water quality). Already, the Partnership is engaged in significant regional efforts to foster entrepreneurship. It is anticipated that these would increase.

## STRUCTURING THE PARTNERSHIP TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN

Successfully carrying out this plan will likely require reallocation of resources and changes to the organizational structure of the Partnership, particularly at the staff level. In addition, some work remains to be done on the roles and governance structure created in the merger transition. The identity of the organization is also not as clear as it should be throughout the community. The task of addressing these organizational issues is the prerogative of the Board, its new CEO and management staff. We do, however, have some observations and thoughts about this issue which we believe may be helpful in making decisions. These observations are outlined in Appendix B.

## MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Any well run organization should have a set of established performance measures to assess overall success. Such measures will be critical in monitoring progress and results associated with the strategies recommended in this plan. Traditional indicators of economic success involve such measures as net job growth, per capita income, capital investment, retail sales and tax base growth. The Partnership should decide on some of these “global” measures for routine monitoring. In addition, specific measures associated with the recommended strategies in this plan should be adopted and incorporated in organizational and individual staff work plans. There are multiple models for measuring and benchmarking results. The Strategic Planning Committee did not have sufficient resources to create a detailed set of performance measures, but the Board and CEO should adopt some early on.

In addition to staff expertise, the Board and CEO are encouraged to utilize one or more of the following resources in establishing these measures:

- A periodic update of the *Benchmark Analysis for Greensboro and Select Cities*, a report prepared by Dr. Keith Debbage of UNCG for Action Greensboro in 2003.
- Periodically commission a report by an outside consulting firm such as McKinsey & Company to evaluate local economic conditions, project the future and recommend actions for improvement
- Assistance from the local universities in establishing key performance indicators

## SETTING PRIORITIES – FOR ACTION AND FUNDING

This is an ambitious plan that will take several years to accomplish. The Board and its new CEO should determine priorities as part of annual work plans. While several new positions are recommended at the staff level, recent changes in key personnel should provide some flexibility for reallocation of operating expenditures. It also may be possible to achieve desired results through regional approaches. Reorganization of the staff and recruitment of new personnel as needed should be given high priority. Acquisition of land for development ready sites should also be a priority given the timeframes of the FedEx development.

## TARGETED CLUSTER APPROACH

### Focusing on Jobs of the Future

Cluster-based economic development strategies have been actively promoted by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and many other national experts as a key ingredient for enhancing the competitiveness of a local economy. Greensboro's economy was long known for its strength in textile, furniture and tobacco manufacturing companies and jobs. The manufacturing component of these clusters has experienced significant reductions in our area and is no longer a driver of economic growth. Successful companies from these traditional industries have shifted their Greensboro presence to more of the "intellectual" side of the business, with key jobs in areas such as design, marketing and supply chain logistics. It is time to actively support and develop additional clusters to help create a new competitive advantage for our community.

In recent history, Greensboro's approach to recruitment, retention and growth of companies could best be described as "broad-based", with significant investment of resources in traditional recruitment activities. While additional attention has been paid to retention and growth of existing companies in the last few years, a focused effort to grow targeted clusters of businesses has been lacking. This plan recommends that such a focus be added to the strategies currently employed. While we can and should continue to cast a wide net for a variety of businesses and job types, we must proactively develop new business clusters which can replace those that gave us our historical strength and niche advantage as a community.

### What is a Cluster?

An industrial cluster is an inter-dependent concentration of related firms and institutions that are connected by a significant flow of goods and services within a compact geographical area. Clusters can enhance competitive advantage because geographic proximity can allow the most innovative firms in an emerging cluster to take advantage of economies of scale and scope, best practices, new technologies and labor markets that offer transferable skills. Textiles and furniture are good examples of clusters which have been historical strengths for our community. Current conditions cry out for replacing them with new, high growth potential groupings.

### Key Ingredients of a Targeted Cluster Approach

A targeted cluster strategy does not just involve traditional business recruitment.

*"Developing clusters is a much more holistic economic development approach which includes business recruitment as just one component. Successfully developing target clusters must include a combination of supporting existing businesses, establishing communication networks, developing education and training programs, and creating an environment attractive to both businesses and workers."*  
(**Regional Vision Plan**, Market Street Services, 6/15/05, p.43)

Cluster-based economic development is not simply a question of key corporate executives, researchers, and local government leaders being geographically proximate to each other. A central theme in any successful cluster strategy is developing social capital and trust where the most innovative firms learn how to *simultaneously compete and collaborate* with each

other in order to foster innovation.

## **Recent Local Studies: Building Momentum**

During the early 2000's, cluster research studies were commissioned by then Forward Greensboro (now the Greensboro Economic Development Partnership), including reports by the Natelson Company (2001) and the MIT Sloan School of Business (2002). Both studies identified several viable clusters that might replace the manufacturing losses in the Triad's textiles/furniture/tobacco troika, including clusters focused on: transportation-shipping-logistics; health sciences, and information technology. The Regional Vision Plan commissioned by the Piedmont Triad Partnership (Market Street Services, 2005) identified health care (including biotechnology), logistics, and wholesale trade as the targeted clusters with the strongest growth prospects in the region.

## **It's Time to Move from Study to Action!**

A common difficulty in developing any cluster-based strategy has proven to be moving from cluster analysis to implementation. The purpose of this action plan is to outline objectives and strategies for implementing a target cluster strategy for Greater Greensboro that involves a detailed work plan. Because of our area's inherent strengths and existing progress in the transport logistics cluster, we have developed a detailed plan for implementation around this particular cluster. This decision does not imply that transport logistics should be our only (or even main) pick for cluster development. In fact, other clusters which hold promise in the short and long terms are suggested, including two related to strengths of our research universities – advanced materials/nanotechnology and life/health sciences. By nurturing a diverse portfolio of high-value added industry clusters that integrate well with Greensboro's colleges and universities, it becomes possible to differentiate ourselves from our competitors and develop a sustainable competitive advantage. While the model for implementation is built around transport logistics, the strategies can be applied effectively to other cluster strengths now and in the future.

## **Why Transport Logistics and what's included?**

The Transport Logistics cluster already has a strong presence in both Guilford County and the Triad, with a diverse range of economic activities. This cluster includes: general freight trucking, third-party logistics providers, supply chain network advisors, warehousing and storage, courier and messenger services, and aviation maintenance. Innovative firms like Transport System Solutions (developer of lighter and more resilient flat panels for truck tractor-trailers that has significant potential to cut fuel and maintenance costs for large trucking fleets) and New Breed (a leading provider of supply chain network solutions with clients like Audiovox, Siemens, and the U.S. Postal Service) are local examples.

Existing transport logistics-related companies include a major UPS sorting facility and the new Dell assembly plant in Forsyth County. FedEx's major new mid-Atlantic hub at PTIA will be a major boost to this cluster's presence. Overall, the existing Transport Logistics cluster employs nearly 25,000 people in the Triad at an average wage of approximately \$40,000.

## **OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES TARGETED CLUSTER APPROACH**

### UTILIZE OUR INHERENT STRENGTHS IN TRANSPORT LOGISTICS TO IMPLEMENT A TARGETED CLUSTER APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND GROWTH OF EMPLOYERS WHO GIVE GREENSBORO A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

#### *Strategy #1*

##### ***Establish a position of Cluster Manager to facilitate both industry retention and targeted recruitment strategies in Transport Logistics and other clusters as designated***

- Presently there is no full-time dedicated professional whose job it is to champion and carry out the tasks necessary to grow the clusters. This position should be established and filled no later than May 2006 at an estimated cost of \$80,000 – 100,000.
- Duties of the Cluster Manager should include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Development of a comprehensive cluster strategy detailing specific programs for leveraging each targeted cluster
  - Recruit companies that can take advantage of transport logistics firms already in Greensboro and recruit companies to fill gaps in the existing market.
  - Co-ordinate the work of various participants in each of the targeted cluster activities and assure specific projects stay on schedule.
  - Assist in obtaining grants from a variety of public and private sources.
  - Conduct and collaborate in research and analysis of clusters, especially with the local universities.
  - Facilitate and assist in establishing local forums for developers, industry leaders, elected officials, and educators active in the targeted clusters to address issues regarding policy, best practice, innovative technologies, alliance networks, etc.
  - Attend conferences and selected trade shows and develop marketing literature to showcase the targeted clusters.
  - Develop a close working relationship with the leading research universities in the local economy.

#### *Strategy #2*

##### ***Expand workforce development programs linked to the targeted clusters, particularly through local institutions of higher learning***

As Transport Logistics and other targeted clusters become larger parts of the local economy, area schools will need to expand existing programs to meet the challenges of training workers and researchers in the clusters. Any workforce development program should include as a minimum the following characteristics:

- Create additional training models to meet the immediate needs of each targeted cluster and assistance in building careers in the industry clusters.
- Develop an on-line resource guide inventorying all the existing and proposed workforce development, training programs and degree programs available in the targeted clusters.
- Develop collaborative programs between the universities and community colleges to allow workers in each targeted cluster to move up into management programs.
- Place a high priority on developing paid graduate student internship opportunities with local businesses in each targeted cluster and encourage the formation of faculty internships by placing professors in a company workplace for a limited period of time.
- Work with local universities and community colleges to attract “superstar” faculty in the targeted cluster research areas.

### *Strategy #3*

#### *Develop a broad-based Cluster Coalition in each targeted cluster*

Presently no effective networking or advocacy group broadly representing each targeted cluster exists in our area. Developing close, face-to-face contacts and trust is crucial in any cluster-based economic development strategy because industry leaders must learn how to simultaneously compete and collaborate if the cluster is to be successful and innovative. The Cluster Coalition should include industry leaders, governmental leaders, and researchers and have the following charge:

- Create a service provider group to facilitate discussion within each targeted cluster and identify an individual of stature within the cluster to play a principal role in facilitation.
- Identify subgroups within each cluster and find common interests (especially between key buyers and suppliers, and researchers) to develop agendas of interest between the leading industry executives in each targeted cluster.
- Establish and sponsor annual “Best Practice” forums featuring regional issues and national speakers. An excellent example is the PTEN Supply Chain Conference held in November 2005 that attracted senior executives and industry participants from across the nation.
- Leverage university-industry partnerships, especially initiatives linked to the Greensboro Center for Innovative Development (for example, Transport Logistics).
- Recommend cluster policies and programs to governmental agencies, particularly focused on the availability of ready-to-go sites, zoning issues, infrastructure issues, and university-industry-community college inter-relationships.
- Act as a clearinghouse and local resource of information and data on the targeted clusters and facilitate marketing and elevating the national profile in the cluster.

### *Strategy #4*

*Using the model established for Transport Logistics, implement strategies for additional clusters with initial focus on higher education strengths of our universities and on financial/insurance services.*

- Build on the strengths of the two leading research institutions in Greensboro – NC A&T and UNCG. Although A&T and UNCG both have broad-based missions, each has special research strengths that may be promising for fostering local industry clusters. This is particularly true if university-industry partnerships can be built, including technology transfer initiatives and other entrepreneurial activities (see the “Entrepreneurial” and “Higher Education” initiatives for further discussion)

Among NC A&T’s research strengths are the fields of surface engineered materials, composites, smart materials, nanoscience and nanomaterials. The university has received over \$8 million in research grants from the National Science Foundation and the Office of Naval Research in this area of specialization. UNCG also has research activity focused on nanotechnology, microscopic sensors, and various advanced materials, especially through the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Companies in the Greater Greensboro area specializing in advanced materials include Stockhausen, Precision Fabrics, BuzzOff, and Nano-Tex.

Among UNCG’s strengths are the life/health sciences. One of the largest employers in the area is the Moses H. Cone Health System with 7,000 employees. The health care industry has become a major component of the Greensboro economy over the past decade. To that end, UNCG has major research initiatives underway in the environmental health sciences, biochemistry and drug design, and obesity prevention. The university has received over \$14M in funding in the Life or Health Sciences. One of the most notable projects is the Guilford Genomic Health Project with Moses Cone Health System and Duke University which is funded by the Department of Defense. NC A&T has also identified public health as a major research area with a focus on minority health disparities, genome research and allied health sciences. Local life science-related industries include Banner Pharmacaps, Procter & Gamble, and Syngenta.

- Build on strengths of key divisions of major national level financial/insurance services companies. Large local employers in the financial and insurance services cluster have generated almost 10,000 jobs in the area. Examples of major service centers include American Express (2100 jobs), Bank of America (1900), the Citigroup/Citicards call center (1500 jobs), United Guaranty/AIG Corporation and Lincoln National (recently merged with Jefferson Pilot). While these companies are not headquartered here, they represent major employers with corporate division level presence in growth sectors that can be of major benefit to our community.
- Continue to support our traditional industries as they adjust to the new economy. Efforts to foster areas such as design, marketing and supply-chain logistics within the textile industry as a “mini cluster” can be a competitive advantage for Greensboro given the existing strong presence of those industries.

*Strategy #5*

***Given the emphasis on transport logistics as a driver of our economy, special attention needs to be paid to the ongoing issue of air quality in the Triad. The Partnership should actively participate in all efforts to avoid non-attainment status under EPA air quality standards.***

- Fully support implementation of the Early Action Compact
- Use the increased lobbying resources recommended in this plan to monitor and influence legislation and regulations concerning air quality
- Play an active role in supporting mass transit options for the community
- Support public education campaigns concerning ways to reduce emissions
- Support siting of a bio-diesel fueling facility in the area

## **HIGH GROWTH ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES**

**The value to our economy of high growth, entrepreneurial businesses deserves and needs more attention and resources.**

Although our community and the Triad focus on traditional industrial recruitment of larger employers as a primary economic development strategy, stimulating entrepreneurial activity is an important and growing focus of economic prosperity throughout the United States. While “big” deals like Dell, FedEx and Citicards get much of the attention, a significant majority (60-80%) of net new jobs created come from smaller business.

This critical segment of our economic matrix is highly undervalued by business leaders, public officials, the media, and even the general public. An example is the highly successful Nussbaum Center incubator and its component NC A&T/UNCG Technology Outreach Program. Few community leaders are cognizant of their regional stature and specifics of the many business successes resulting from their work.

Media coverage is naturally drawn toward the bigger deals. The addition of 100 or more jobs at one time, even if wage levels are modest, gets much more attention than 10 smaller companies growing 10 jobs each over several years, even though they may be higher paying and in high growth markets. Adding to this dilemma is that fact that most government incentive programs are targeted at larger deals that involve significant numbers of jobs and/or major capital investment. Recognizing and investing in the true value of the smaller, but high growth, entrepreneurial firms is a real challenge. But if met, it is a challenge that could pay high rewards.

Many experts, including Michael Porter of Harvard Business School’s Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, believe that technological change through innovation by entrepreneurs is at the heart of regional competitiveness and is essential to a community’s long term prosperity. It is time in Greensboro to devote additional attention and resources to this critical element of our economic success.

**The new emphasis should be on high growth entrepreneurial businesses as distinguished from more “stable” small businesses**

Although “entrepreneurship” and “small business” are terms defined in various ways and sometimes used interchangeably, this plan focuses on strategies to support formation and success of “high impact/high growth” companies. Such companies have the potential to rapidly create a significant numbers of quality jobs, company revenues and/or shareholder wealth. With no hard and fast definitions of what distinguishes high growth entrepreneurial firms from more stable small businesses, a rule-of-thumb suggests that businesses likely to create 20 or more net new jobs and revenues in excess of \$1M annually within five years of start up would fall in the former category.

High growth entrepreneurial firms are more likely to be in emerging market sectors as opposed to, for example, a small retail business in an established service sector such as a restaurant or landscaping service. Sometimes referred to as “lifestyle” businesses, these small companies that are not high growth are very valuable to the economy and deserve support. But

their needs are different from the more entrepreneurial businesses that are venturing into new markets with high risk/high reward conditions. While the distinction may seem subtle (or even obtuse) to some, what is most lacking in Greensboro today, and therefore most needed, is stepped up support for the high growth entrepreneurial sector.

**Availability of capital is the single most important factor in stimulating entrepreneurship, and Greensboro needs to make more available.**

Greensboro is believed to be a net “exporter” of venture capital and currently can claim only four main resident sources for early stage companies: 1) the Chamber’s Venture Capital Fund, a high risk loan pool funded by area banks; 2) the City of Greensboro’s Targeted Loan Program focused on small loans to businesses locating or expanding into designated economic development zones; 3) the Piedmont Angel Network (PAN), a \$4.5 M equity fund that will invest up to \$500,000 in early-stage companies within a three-hour drive of the Triad; and, 4) the Inception Micro Angel Fund (IMAF), a \$600,000 equity fund that will invest \$25,000–100,000 in seed-stage companies in the Triad. Relatively small investments by Greensboro organizations and business leaders in these and other seed-stage capital funds can have significant impacts on assisting the development of small, high growth enterprises and attracting entrepreneurs to our community.

**Regional cooperation is a natural for this initiative.**

Cooperating at a regional level in this area is easier than most other initiatives for several reasons: 1) there is less natural competition between neighboring communities for location and start up of smaller entrepreneurial businesses than for the “big” deals; 2) due in part to high risk, limited available capital can be pooled from multiple sources and focused on highest reward potential; and, 3) there is an established track record of success already developed for regional cooperation in the form of the Piedmont Triad Entrepreneurial Network (PTEN) and its predecessor organizations.

PTEN is jointly funded by Action Greensboro, the Winston-Salem Alliance, and High Point Partners, along with corporate sponsors from the three communities. It offers programs and resources in five areas: education and mentoring; networking; business plan competitions; capital access; and, communications.

Building on its success to date, PTEN plans a feasibility study in early 2006 for a multi-million dollar capital campaign. Accordingly, our plan recommends simultaneous investment in new resources for Greensboro as well as existing support vehicles in the Triad.

**OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES  
HIGH GROWTH ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT**

**RAISE THE LEVEL OF RECOGNITION & SUPPORT FOR HIGH GROWTH  
ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY AND TO EXTERNAL  
AUDIENCES**

***Strategy #1***

***Create an “equal status” Entrepreneurial Operating Group within the Partnership organization that is led by a full-time Senior Manager (an “Entrepreneurship Czar”).***

- Currently no organization structure and no single individual are charged with fostering the community’s entrepreneurial support efforts. The Entrepreneurial Operating Group should be comprised of influential volunteer leaders and it should be in place by February 2006.
- A senior professional Manager to lead this effort on a full-time basis should be selected and in place no later than the summer of 2006. Needed funding is estimated at \$125,000–175,000 for the Manager and necessary support.
- The Operating Group, along with the Manager, should develop a detailed work plan in keeping with strategies outlined in this plan, and that plan should be updated annually.

***Strategy #2***

***The new entrepreneurial support structure (Operating Group and Manager) should collaborate closely with PTEN and other regional resources focused on this critical sector.***

- Education/marketing materials should be prepared setting forth the case for support (including substantial funding) for entrepreneurship in order to convince business, government and foundation leaders of its value.
- Create an on-line resource highlighting available support services and include testimonials from our community’s most successful entrepreneurs.
- Create a cadre of trained volunteers (SCORE could be a resource) to assist aspiring entrepreneurs so as to lessen the intensive consulting burden on paid staff. An entrepreneurship “hotline” might be established for easy access.

**SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF INVESTMENT CAPITAL AVAILABLE  
FOR HIGH GROWTH ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES**

***Strategy #1***

***Create a self-sustaining entrepreneurial Incentives Program for businesses locating in Greensboro.***

- Initial capital commitment should be at least \$250,000 with a longer term goal of \$1M
- The initial amount should be in place and available by summer 2006.
- The newly formed Operating Group should establish rules and procedures for administration of the fund.
- Successful firms should be required to repay incentive payments after a certain period in order to sustain the fund for future use.

*Strategy #2*

***Mount an awareness and fund raising campaign targeted at Greensboro's banking, business and foundation leaders to substantially increase the loan and investment funds currently managed by the Chamber, PAN and IMAF.***

- An investment allocation by corporations, foundations and individuals of \$50,000–\$100,000 to PAN and/or IMAF is suggested. Even a modest number of investments of these amounts will give our area a competitive advantage.
- The Chamber's Venture Capital Fund is seeking total loan commitments of \$2 million from regional banking institutions.

**STRENGTHEN & ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PTEN IN ORDER TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT REGIONAL EFFORTS TO FOSTER GROWTH OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPANIES**

*Strategy #1*

***Commit multi-year funding from the Partnership to the upcoming PTEN capital campaign and publicly encourage other entities in Greensboro to do so.***

- The amount contributed should be proportionate to that of economic development entities in other Triad communities.

## **DEVELOPMENT-READY SITES AND REDEVELOPMENT OF STRUGGLING CORRIDORS**

**Greensboro should quickly solve its problem of limited development-ready sites for office/industrial locations and corporate parks.**

There is a significant shortage of industrial/office sites ready for building construction in Greensboro and Guilford County. (Some recent announcements by private developers may start addressing the shortage.) This is particularly problematic in today's business environment where large companies frequently want operations up and running very shortly after making location decisions. Our area's recent experience with Dell is the "poster child" for this situation, but we are aware of other missed opportunities as result of this shortage and likely unaware of many more. The cost to assemble and hold valuable land for potentially long build out periods is prohibitive for most private developers. This is precisely why we have seen a number of prime corporate park/industrial type sites developed as residential projects in our area in recent years. Of particular concern are good sites on the east side of Greensboro, along the high potential I-85, US 70 corridor, where single and multi-family residential developments are beginning to proliferate. Similar concerns exist for the "Heart of the Triad" area.

This trend is a vicious circle of sorts, since residential development that precedes commercial/industrial is much more problematic than the reverse. Once people are living in an area that is otherwise undeveloped, they tend to resist changes involving other non-residential development and the associated traffic and congestion. This plan calls for quick action to rectify this situation by partnering public and private resources to acquire additional sites and prepare them for quick construction opportunities.

**FedEx is imminent and will create a need for even more ready-sites: We must be prepared!**

The fast approaching opening (approximately 3 years away in 2009) of the FedEx Mid-Atlantic Hub will mean much more to our area than the jobs and capital investment that FedEx itself creates. It is documented in other communities who have experienced these hubs that a major outcome is the spin-off locations occurring as a result of FedEx. A 1999 study of the impact of FedEx on the Triad conducted by RTS, Inc. drew the following conclusion:

*"But the important lesson to learn from other FedEx hub locations is how transportation inter-dependencies among similar and complementary businesses have been leveraged by well-developed transportation and logistics infra-structure to create powerful magnets that attract and spawn high technology, high value, and high wage transportations sensitive businesses. That is the prize for the Piedmont Triad (emphasis added)."*

*(Federal Express in the Piedmont Triad: Economic Impacts and Opportunities, Regional Technology Strategies, Inc., 1999, p.3)*

Thus, the need for ready sites in strategic locations will only increase, perhaps significantly, in coming years. This plan urges us to act now to take advantage.

**While we focus on the “greenfields” of new development, we should plan for the redevelopment of existing commercial/industrial areas that have deteriorated or are struggling.**

A truly healthy and vibrant community should not ignore previously developed areas which have seriously declined or are showing signs of doing so. There are compelling social reasons (crime, community aesthetics, etc.) for paying attention to such areas, but there are also sound business reasons. In many cases there is significant existing investment in infrastructure. Continuing to “sprawl” outward can have detrimental effects on traffic, air quality and fuel consumption. Public services to new areas is sometimes more expensive than providing the same service to more compact development. It is also possible, although challenging, that some of these areas can fill the need for ready sites noted above. Greensboro’s recently completed Comprehensive Plan for growth management and land use noted this dilemma and incorporated a number of ideas to deal with it. There are 12 such specific corridors identified in the plan, and they do not cover all of the areas of concern.

Greensboro’s programs to address the need for good, affordable housing and residential neighborhood development are much more advanced than its programs to deal with struggling commercial/industrial corridors. The challenges of redevelopment in private business corridors with lots of underutilized and/or deteriorated vertical construction, sometimes poorly planned to boot, are sobering. But left totally to the private market, they can become significant drains on a community’s economy and social capital. It is time to focus additional public and private attention and resources on this problem. The recent renaissance in downtown can be used to some extent as a model on how to proceed.

**OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES  
DEVELOPMENT-READY SITES AND REDEVELOPMENT OF STRUGGLING  
CORRIDORS**

QUICKLY ASSEMBLE LARGE TRACTS OF DEVELOPMENT-READY LAND

*Strategy #1*

***Secure a minimum of 1000 acres of strategically located land for office/industrial sites or parks and prepare them for rapid development.***

- At least two sites should be a minimum of 200 acres
- Priority should be given to sites that are within 8-10 miles of the airport, on both the east and west sides of Greensboro, with good interstate access.
- Particular attention should be paid to locations that are vulnerable to residential development in the near term.
- In addition to the affirmative action to acquire the land, a strong effort should be made by the Partnership to “sell” local elected officials who control zoning decisions on the wisdom of protecting strategic locations for non-residential/non-retail development.
- At least 400 acres should be secured by 2007 with the remainder secured no later than 2010.
- Water and sewer service should be provided to the sites, road access addressed in each case,

and proper zoning enacted. Grading issues should be addressed on a case-by-case basis and as part of site selection.

- Estimated cost of land acquisition for 1000 acres is \$25–50 million depending on location with infrastructure likely to be in the range of \$25–40 thousand/acre.

### ***Strategy #2***

#### ***Employ creative techniques to fund land acquisition and infrastructure development.***

- Strong consideration should be given to utilizing the existing reserve in the City/County Water & Sewer Fund as capital for land acquisition and utility service. That fund currently has approximately \$15 million. If structured properly, any land acquired could be held as an asset of the fund, with repayment to the fund once land was sold or leased to private interests.
- Explore the possibility of creating a multi-jurisdictional authority for land acquisition and development.
- Explore creative partnerships between the private and public sectors to help cover costs, including a lender consortia of private banks paired with public investment via bond financing or use of reserve funds as described above.
- Consider buying development rights of target sites.
- Consider setting up a revolving fund which would receive revenues as development occurs in order to fund future projects.
- Consider use of Development Project Financing (Amendment One Legislation) for infrastructure improvements.

### ***Strategy #3***

***Partner with surrounding counties and assist them with development of ready sites in less urban areas for companies that may prefer such locations, as opposed to sites close to major highways or dense populations.***

#### **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSIST STRUGGLING OR DETERIORATED COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CORRIDORS AND AREAS OF OUR CITY**

### ***Strategy #1***

***Partner with local governments to initiate a long range planning process to identify and implement redevelopment activities in deteriorated or struggling areas of our community that have previously been developed for commercial/industrial, as opposed to residential, purposes.***

- Plans should include and address:
  - A comprehensive map of targeted areas that includes calculated potential revenue yields from redevelopment (potential return on investment)
  - Analysis of public and private options for participation
  - Analysis of crime and other “social” disadvantages of allowing the deterioration to continue

- Analysis of public infrastructure investments already existing
- Options for financing improvements including General Obligation bonds, Project Development Financing, geographically targeted incentives, Certificates of Participation, special tax or business improvement districts, brownfield grants, and joint City/County financing.
- Consideration should be given to the establishment of a Redevelopment and Reinvestment Commission whose charge is to deal with non-residential areas as identified.
- Local government should take the lead, but with strong support and advocacy by the Partnership and other business interests. A campaign to educate the public on the benefits of redevelopment will be needed and should be actively supported.

## **CAPITALIZING ON OUR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**

### **Greensboro has an abundance of higher education resources.**

As the national economy shifts to a knowledge driven model, education and retraining of available workforces becomes increasingly vital for success. While the quality of K-12 schools is critical in any community, those areas with rich resources in post-secondary education possess a special advantage. Greensboro is fortunate to be one of those areas with its seven colleges and universities, including two branches of the prestigious UNC system. Nearly 30,000 students are enrolled at these institutions. Few communities our size enjoy the scope and diversity of resources we have. While NC A&T and UNCG possess the most research capabilities, and GTCC is the workhorse of workforce preparedness, Bennett, Greensboro and Guilford Colleges offer specialized degree programs which have uniquely positive impacts on our economy. The soon to be opened Elon University School of Law in downtown will add yet another valuable resource to our portfolio.

Individually and collectively, these institutions make a tremendous direct impact on our local economy via salaries paid to faculty and staff, student spending, and other operational investments. They contribute greatly to the richness of culture and other elements of quality of life and are great assets to sell to companies and individuals considering locating here. This plan emphasizes the opportunities associated with three of those institutions (NC A&T, UNCG, and GTCC) for their particular strengths related to future economic development efforts in our area.

### **We must make better use of the research strengths of NCA&T and UNCG in fostering our economic growth.**

Both NCA&T and UNCG have a wealth of research strengths in a broad spectrum of specialties. Each institution also has numerous existing relationships with local and non-local business interests which benefit our economy. As members of the UNC System, both institutions have a mandate from the Board of Governors to include economic development as part of their missions. While each works effectively on its own in many of these relationships, they also have implemented some very positive joint efforts in recent years.

Two such efforts have particular promise for fostering targeted economic development initiatives for our community. The Greensboro Center for Innovative Development is a jointly created, owned and operated center for the advancement of applied research, technology transfer, and growth of entrepreneurs in emerging fields and markets. It includes a partially developed “North” campus and an undeveloped “South” campus at present and is in early stages of formation. The Technology Outreach at Nussbaum program is a joint effort of both schools located at the Nussbaum incubator. Its purpose is to assist entrepreneurs with unique ideas in moving from concept to market, including patent/trademark application, market research, access to venture capital, and other business plan assistance.

For purposes of this strategic plan, it is important to focus on a limited number of the research universities’ strengths, as the Partnership does not have the resources to support all of them. In keeping with the recommended strategies involving targeted clusters, three areas have been chosen for initial focus: Transport Logistics, Advanced Materials/Nanotechnology, and

Health/Life Sciences.

**GTCC is outstanding at workforce preparedness and should get more support.**

Community colleges have long understood the value of economic development and have fully embraced the concept within their academic missions. GTCC has an outstanding track record in this regard – quickly responding to the needs of the business community for specialized skill training. Their work supports existing business and new business locating to the area, and they are a key asset in all recruitment efforts. GTCC’s physical facilities and program have expanded a good deal in recent years, including a major new campus on the east side of Greensboro. As our local economy undergoes fundamental change, GTCC will become an even more important element of our economic development tool kit. The “culture” of the organization is already fully aligned with our most pressing business needs. We need to ensure that GTCC continues to have the necessary resources, recognition and support to get even better.

**The collective creativity and brainpower of all of our colleges and universities, coupled with our own Center for Creative Leadership, should be harnessed to move us in positive directions.**

Taking a cue from Richard Florida’s “Creative Class” theories, Greensboro can take even more advantage of its collective higher education resources than it does now. While the special strengths of UNCG, NCA&T and GTCC should be tapped as outlined in this plan, an effort should be launched to further utilize the full wealth of the collective advantages of all seven institutions. The three private colleges (Bennett, Greensboro and Guilford) and the new Law School (Elon) can make significant contributions to fostering a community culture that supports “talent, technology, territorial assets, and tolerance”. That culture can cause many individuals who will be filling the higher paying jobs of the future to want to come and stay here. Coupled with the nationally prominent resources of the Center for Creative Leadership, our colleges and universities can become a local cauldron of cutting edge ideas and actions that position our community to take unique advantage of the world of tomorrow. This “collective asset” is something that can make us different. We simply need to better harness and capitalize on this abundant, available talent and energy.

**OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES  
CAPITALIZING ON OUR HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES**

**DEVELOP COMPETITIVE CLUSTERS IN COORDINATION WITH RESEARCH STRENGTHS OF NCA&T AND UNCG**

***Strategy #1***

***Develop local funding, including endowments, to supplement and advance university programs in targeted clusters (transport logistics, health/life sciences, advanced materials/nanotechnology), including attraction of “superstar” faculty/researchers and necessary facilities.***

- The universities have previously made requests for funding in these areas, which were not acted upon. Similar requests should be refined in keeping with this plan’s targeted clusters and submitted in time for consideration in the Partnership’s 2007 budget.
- The university submissions should include an analysis of how requested funds will be leveraged with other funds available to the universities as well as the expected benefits related to the identified clusters.

***Strategy #2***

***Organize and conduct regular educational and networking events which involve faculty/researchers/students with the business community to promote and advance the clusters.***

- Develop an advisory group of academic and business representatives to foster development of each cluster
- Hold annual forums, organized by the advisory group with staff support from the Partnership, for researchers/students to learn about specific targets within the clusters as background for structuring their work.
- Hold a semi-annual orientation program at the GCID to introduce the academic and business communities to each other’s needs.

***Strategy #3***

***Promote existing RFP processes for the business community to seek University support of programs that would enhance the clusters.***

**PARTNER WITH NCA&T AND UNCG IN ADVANCING PROGRESS OF THE GREENSBORO CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT, UTILIZING THE CENTER AS AN EFFICIENT, EASILY COMMUNICATED MECHANISM FOR ENHANCING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOTH UNIVERSITIES SIMULTANEOUSLY**

***Strategy #1***

***Support the formation and lobby/allocate funds for a Greensboro Center for Innovative Development Research Foundation.***

- The foundation would seek individual and joint research funding, particularly for identified and emerging target clusters
- Enhanced revenue opportunities from University patents/licensing/royalties could be reinvested via the foundation for other research and entrepreneurial activities

### *Strategy #2*

*Staff designated within the Partnership to foster targeted clusters should lobby for external funding and work with the GCID to develop joint funding for accelerating research and support activities for the clusters.*

### *Strategy #3*

*Assign the new “Entrepreneurship Czar” to work with the GCID to nurture high growth entrepreneurial businesses.*

- Financially support staff at the GCID to match human resources throughout both universities to local business opportunities

### *Strategy #4*

*Use the GCID as an additional means of creating student internships with the business community.*

- House the Triad InternNet at the GCID and provide financial support for its ongoing operations and growth

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE OF CREATIVITY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITIES WITH A FOCUS ON COMMERCIALIZATION/TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CAPABILITIES (MOVING RESEARCH TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND MARKETS)

### *Strategy #1*

*Utilize staff of the new Entrepreneurship Operating Group to organize, in conjunction with the universities, specific events and activities to enhance entrepreneurial culture.*

- Identify and publicize (create a “buzz”) the work and successes of entrepreneurial faculty, researchers, and students as models for others
- Create a GCID entrepreneurship speaker series featuring nationally known entrepreneurs and experts on entrepreneurship.
- Review rules/policies that may impede entrepreneurship efforts by faculty or alliances between business and universities and work with university administration to reduce or eliminate.

**Strategy #2**

***Allocate funding or lobby for alternative funding to support continuation of the NCA&T/UNCG Technology Outreach at Nussbaum program.***

**BUILD ON THE CAPABILITIES OF GTCC AS OUR PRIMARY “RAPID RESPONSE” WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS VEHICLE**

**Strategy #1**

***Include GTCC in all activities related to fostering development of identified and emerging clusters, including forums and the Advisory Group. GTCC should have regular seat at the table.***

**Strategy #2**

***Lobby for additional local, state and federal funding for GTCC’s programs which support workforce development, particularly for identified clusters.***

**Strategy #3**

***Promote, within the community and externally, GTCC’s key role and capabilities in workforce preparedness and support of the clusters.***

- GTCC already has programs that support the targeted clusters (for example, Associate degrees in heavy trucking service and repair, aviation maintenance and management, physical therapy, etc.) and is planning additional ones (Global Logistics Technology degree, Associate Degree in Nanotechnology, etc.). The Partnership needs to actively support and promote these programs and their continued funding and expansion.

**UNDER GUIDANCE OF THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP, INITIATE A FORUM WITH REGULAR MEETINGS OF KEY LEADERS OF ALL SEVEN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO HARNESS THEIR COLLECTIVE ENERGY TO FOSTER THE CREATIVE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.**

**Strategy #1**

***During Spring of 2006, convene a work session led by the CCL that includes key representatives of all the colleges and universities and a small group of community leaders to brainstorm ways to foster innovation and creativity throughout the community.***

- Key questions which might be explored at the session could include:
  - How can the community better support budding entrepreneurs?
  - How can we get young professionals more engaged?
  - What are ways to build on our heritage of tolerance for diversity?
  - How can we market ourselves externally as a great place for creative people?
- One or more of the local foundations should take the lead on working with CCL and the colleges to organize the event and sustain future activities.
- In essence, the institutions of higher education would become the “think tank” for the

movement.

- Former CCL Vice President Stanley Gyskiewicz's concept of "positive turbulence" might serve as a model for this effort
- Greensboro has a number of local resources who are certified in various creativity/innovation techniques (such as deBono) who could be called upon for assistance.

## **ENHANCING INFLUENCE ON AND RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT**

### **Partnerships between government and business are vital to economic success.**

A community's economy is greatly impacted by the actions, or lack thereof, of governments at all levels. The impacts come in the form of regulations, expenditure of public funds, level and quality of public services, policy decisions, and community leadership. A high level of public services at reasonable tax rates is one of the most critical factors in the economic status of any community. And there is little question about the impact, positive and negative, that government regulations have on business.

While the interests of government and the private sector are, and should be, different in many cases, effective working relations and partnerships between business and government are critical to quality of life and economic vibrancy. This is particularly true in an area like Greensboro, when economic growth in the private sector generates insufficient revenue to keep up with service level expectations or desires. While national and world economic conditions have a major impact on local economies, government expenditures and policies play a significant role and deserve careful attention. This plan acknowledges that relationship and recommends some improvements over present practices.

At the state and federal levels, regulations greatly impact critical local economic factors such as transportation, air and water quality, public schools, business incentives, public facilities and programs, and local authority. Significant funding for economic impact is also available from both government levels. At the local level, policy decisions on issues such as land development, service levels, and infrastructure are inextricably connected with economic success.

### **The Quality of our Public Schools is a Key to our Economic Vitality**

The real and perceived quality of a community's pre K-12 public school system is a major factor in recruiting and retaining good employers and employees. Many people believe that if Guilford County had the strongest public education system in the southeast, little else would need to be done to foster economic growth. With truly superior public schools, businesses and individuals would flock to our area. While achieving that lofty goal may present a daunting challenge, we must make the effort. That effort should be pursued with at least three themes: 1) increasing our public investment in schools; 2) continuing private support such as the Commitment to Excellence program; and, 3) enhancing knowledge and recognition of the challenges and successes of the system. The overall goal should be to improve the academic performance, physical assets, and student experience throughout the system – and make sure the positive stories are told.

### **Greensboro and Guilford County can do better at building Partnerships between Government and the Business Community.**

There is a general consensus among local leaders that, although improved in recent years, our area's influence in the General Assembly lags behind some other major metropolitan areas of

the State. There are also few resources dedicated to influencing legislation, regulations and funding at the federal level. While far from a panacea for our economic problems, actions and funding from these two levels of government can make a substantial difference on local prosperity. This plan recommends a significant increase in resources allocated to influencing state and federal decision-making.

At the local level, a fair amount of “disconnect” exists between the business community and local elected bodies, particularly on issues involving major budget decisions and policies impacting long-term community conditions. Examples include the funding of public schools and school facilities, land development related to available business sites, and expectations surrounding incentives. While there are some efforts periodically to communicate, and individual elected officials and business leaders relate well, there is no established mechanism for serious ongoing dialogue about major public policy matters. Business leaders are frequently surprised, confused, and sometimes disappointed with decisions made by elected bodies. Elected officials, on the other hand, frequently feel that business leaders are out of touch with the general public that elected officials must deal with and to which they must be accountable. Elected officials also feel that business leaders are too often behind the scenes regarding controversial matters and do not publicly support “courageous” but unpopular decisions as they should. This plan suggests some strategies to reduce this disconnect and enhance the partnerships.

**OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES  
INFLUENCE ON AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT**

**LAUNCH A FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL EFFORT TO INFLUENCE STATE AND FEDERAL DECISION-MAKING THAT AFFECTS OUR ABILITY TO DEVELOP OUR ECONOMY.**

***Strategy #1***

***Fund a full-time staff lobbyist at the Partnership and contract consulting assistance as needed to pursue favorable regulations, funding and key committee appointments for Greensboro/Guilford at state and federal levels.***

- The position and consulting should be funded primarily by the private sector and be responsible for a business agenda
- The staff person would spend most of their time in Raleigh during legislative sessions
- A “Legislative Council” of the Partnership should be created to establish the agenda for lobbying
- Examples of increased lobbying efforts would be:
  - Earlier completion of the loop
  - Funding for roads for the “Heart of the Triad” project
  - Improvements to US 70 on the east
  - More reasonable air quality standards
  - Brownfield redevelopment grants
  - State funds to assist with ready sites
  - State and federal mandates that inhibit progress with K-12 schools
- The staff person would manage any contract consultants in keeping with direction from the Legislative Council
- An investment of \$1 million for a 5 year period is suggested to fund this strategy, with the ultimate amount allocated (including in any given year) being based on a thorough analysis of results after the first 18-24 months. Results should be judged on funds obtained and success of regulatory influence.
- A search for the position should begin in early 2006 with the selected person in place in time to influence the 2006 legislative session.

***Strategy #2***

***Ensure that lobbying efforts are closely coordinated with local government legislative agendas, particularly where common interests exist.***

- Continue to actively support local government legislative agenda items that benefit economic development and the business community.
- Include representation from local government on the Partnership’s Legislative Council

**PARTNER WITH THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND SCHOOL BOARD TO ENHANCE THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND REPUTATION OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

***Strategy #1***

*Continue funding of the Commitment to Excellence initiative and periodically evaluate results of those efforts and adjust programs/projects as needed.*

***Strategy #2***

*Work closely with the Commissioners and School Board to develop a long range plan to increase school budgets (operating and capital) as well as commitment of human resources (parents, volunteers and staff) to improving the academic performance, physical assets and overall student experience throughout the system. Recruitment and retention of high quality teachers should be a centerpiece of this effort.*

***Strategy #3***

*Fund and develop a campaign to enhance marketing of the successes of the schools.*

**IMPROVE ONGOING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL ELECTED BODIES.**

***Strategy #1***

*Establish a formal mechanism for regular (quarterly or semi-annual) meetings and communication between business leaders and City Council and County Commissioners on strategic community issues.*

- The Partnership should take the lead in creating the forum and an agenda for the sessions, but affirmatively solicit local elected official input.
- Strategic topics with long-term community implications should form the majority of agenda items rather than urgent but less important “hot” topics.
- Key business leaders (CEO level) must participate
- Care should be taken to create a meeting environment where meaningful exchange of ideas and creative thinking can take place as opposed to posturing and headline grabbing remarks.
- The Center for Creative Leadership could be a resource to help structure and perhaps facilitate the process.
- The mechanism should be in place and active no later than April 2006 in order to ensure input on local budget issues.

***Strategy #2***

*Strengthen the role the business community plays in civic affairs, particularly participation in the policy making process on significant issues, even when the issues are controversial.*

- Establish a standing committee of the Partnership that monitors progress of the City and County on major policy issues such as growth management, capital improvements, service levels, infrastructure needs, and business incentive policies. The objective should be a higher level of engagement.
  - The committee should orchestrate systematic participation by business leaders in public input and decision-making processes including appearances at Council/Commission meetings, advocacy presentations to civic and neighborhood groups, letters to the editor,

- and meetings with individual elected officials.
- Special efforts should be made to learn more about and empathize with the “unique world” within which elected officials operate. Advocacy should include non-partisan political support and backing on sensitive political stands like major zoning decisions and budget choices.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY SPIRIT, IMAGE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### **A “Can Do” Spirit is Emerging in Greensboro – Let’s Seize the Moment!**

The recent renaissance of our downtown has provided a great boost to our community spirit and sense that we can control our destiny. Despite the fact that we don’t possess some of the natural assets of some of the communities we frequently compare ourselves to (a river is the best example), we transformed a sleepy, uneventful center city into a local and regional hot spot in less than a decade. The combination of foundation, private and public partnerships that brought this about can serve as a model for other areas critical to our community’s future. We can and should do more to celebrate and promote our unique assets such as superior parks and recreation facilities, reasonable cost of living, high quality/reasonably priced housing, rich mix of cultural and arts offerings, and superior road system and traffic flow. Many Greensboro organizations and facilities such as the Center for Creative Leadership, Nussbaum Incubator, public libraries, and Coliseum are the envy of many communities. We can do much more to capitalize on our colleges and universities as suggested elsewhere in this plan. We are in a highly advantageous location within the state and on the east coast, and can do more to take advantage of this competitive edge for business. And we have a rich history of tackling diversity issues which could serve as a real competitive advantage for us as a place to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the same time that we find ourselves at a crossroad regarding the future of our economy, we have a unique set of strengths upon which to build forward thinking momentum.

### **We lack a clear image—internally and to the outside world.**

A significant challenge is our acknowledged lack of a clear image for our community. Studies have shown that others across the state and nation have trouble picturing what Greensboro is all about. Our limited progress on working well together regionally and creating a common Triad image contributes to this fuzziness, as does the existence of three strong cities in two counties. In 2002, Action Greensboro and the Chamber of Commerce launched a marketing campaign, *Greensboro – A Great Place to Connect*, to attempt to focus our community on its many strengths and serve as a platform for telling our story externally. This effort included some innovative ideas, and won two national awards. But the theme has yet to catch on locally as intended, and we have made little progress clarifying and promoting an image to the rest of the world. If we are truly to build our community’s spirit and culture for optimistic action, we must work on the image issue. We need to determine who we are and who we are going to be, get comfortable with it, and tell our story, effectively and with passion - to ourselves and others.

### **Our Community is Increasingly Diverse – Let’s Seize Opportunities to Grow our Economy and Quality of Life for All.**

Many countries of origin are represented in the Guilford County area and about 60,000 people live in immigrant families or families that speak a language other than English at home. Within Guilford County Schools there are almost 100 languages spoken, with representatives from over 70 countries. This diversity reflects the heritage of this country and presents a bundle of opportunities and challenges.

The distribution of talent, or human capital, is an important factor in economic geography. Talent is often attracted by diversity, or what are referred to as low barriers to entry of human capital. Guilford County has experienced a dramatic shift in demographics in the past generation. Triad growth in the last decade also reflects a shift in our history of immigrant acculturation. Historically, immigrants primarily settled in large coastal cities. Beginning in the 90's we began to see first-generation immigrants settling in moderate sized cities where there were job opportunities and a welcoming community. Greensboro mirrors the rest of the state with the Latino influx, but is unique in the diversity of other immigrant communities.

Our area's increasingly diverse population provides unique business opportunities. Clearly large new markets are developing and immigrants are becoming a much larger and more critical pool within our available labor force. Opportunities to grow relationships with and support minority and women owned businesses abound. The Partnership needs to seize and address these opportunities in each of its strategies to grow the economy and quality of life.

## **OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY SPIRIT, IMAGE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

#### SEIZE THE MOMENTUM OF THE CURRENT "CAN DO" ATTITUDE AND REINFORCE THE IMAGE OF A COMMUNITY "ON THE MOVE" TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

##### *Strategy #1*

*Make marketing and public relations an integral component of the Partnership's work plan.*

- Evaluate the status and results of the "Greensboro, a Great Place to Connect" campaign and initiate a reinvigorated brand/image effort that focuses on our unique community strengths and the economic development initiative outlined in this plan. Expand outside the community.
- Coordinate the broader brand/image effort with the one planned for our public schools
- Coordinate details of the campaign with similar regional efforts.

#### ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND INCLUSION INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING OUR GROWING DIVERSITY.

##### *Strategy #1*

*Working with the Foundations and the Center for Creative Leadership, facilitate the creation of a new umbrella structure of various leadership groups (synerG, Jaycees, Junior League, Future Fund, Civic Clubs, etc.) that will coordinate efforts to educate and engage young professionals in key community leadership roles.*

##### *Strategy #2*

*Continue to develop and promote a community agenda to attract and retain young professionals.*

- The Partnership should use action oriented projects to attract young professionals and to engage them in leadership opportunities and structure. These projects might include Get Down! Town, Golf Tournament, Civil Rights Museum, downtown projects, and youth at risk.

**SEIZING UPON THE TALENTS AND EXPERTISE OF AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE POPULATION, CONTINUE TO ENGAGE CITIZENS IN ENHANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL.**

***Strategy # 1***

***Ensure that the Board, staff, and all committees of the Partnership are reasonably representative of the community's diversity.***

- The Partnership's CEO should be held responsible for staff diversity and broad representation on committees and task forces.
- Organization diversity and the extent to which the Partnership is addressing diversity issues should be a formal agenda topic for the Board at least semiannually.

***Strategy #2***

***Include specific activities in the annual work plan of the Partnership and its operating groups that address the needs and economic opportunities of Greensboro's demographic groups.***

- In 2006, the Partnership should convene a broad group of organizations working with immigrant populations (United Way, Guilford County Schools, Department of Social Services, Lutheran Family Services, Center for New North Carolinians, etc.) to discuss and identify trends and needs that impact the local economy and the role these segments of our population play.

**A COMMUNITY'S CENTER CITY IS THE NUMBER ONE INDICATOR OF ITS ECONOMIC VIBRANCY. IT IS THE HEARTSPACE OF A COMMUNITY AND THE ONE NEIGHBORHOOD SHARED BY ALL. THE REVITALIZATION OF GREENSBORO'S DOWNTOWN CONTINUES TO BE A PRIORITY FOR THE PARTNERSHIP.**

***Strategy # 1***

***Promote public/private partnerships to support implementation of the Center City Master Plan.***

- The Partnership should partner with Downtown Greensboro, Inc. and the City of Greensboro to ensure that the City adopts aggressive development incentive policies to support private investment in the Center City.
- The Partnership should encourage the City to assist in the development of the Bellemeade Neighborhood and the renovation of the Wachovia Building.
- The Partnership should partner with the City of Greensboro, Downtown Greensboro, Inc., the

Arts Council and others to increase public art in the Center City and to institute streetscape guidelines.

***Strategy #2***

***Partner with others to identify and ensure implementation of signature projects in the Center City.***

- In 2006, the signature projects are: Elon Law School, 4.2 mile Bicentennial Greenway loop around the Center City, and the Civil Rights Museum.

**CONTINUE THE PARTNERHSHIP'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN AND SUPPORT OF PROJECTS AND EVENTS THAT DISTINGUISH GREENSBORO/GUILFORD COUNTY FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES**

***Strategy #1***

***In addition to the Center City projects noted above, partner with others to support and promote major signature projects and events.***

- In 2006, projects of particular note would include the PGA Golf Tournament, War Memorial Auditorium renovations, the ACC Hall of Champions, and other potential City or County bond projects.

## Appendix A

### **REGIONALISM**

This plan is focused on Greensboro and Guilford County. While we acknowledge the great value of approaching economic development at the Triad or regional level, we were not sanctioned and charged by any regional authority. That fact says a lot about the conundrum of the regional ideal. Most experts tout the notion of regional cooperation and regional approaches as crucial in today's economy. But the systems and organizational structures – both public and private – that exist to carry out economic development activities are, for the most part, set up on scales below the regional level. Governmental entities in particular suffer from this pattern. In fact, there is a trend for more such governmental units in Guilford and Forsyth counties in recent years.

In addition to the structural or systemic problems, patterns of behavior inhibit true regional approaches. Rather than pooling limited resources to attract large new employers to the region, individual communities tend to compete with one another to locate the company in their “backyard”. This is particularly dysfunctional, when thinking regionally, in instances where large incentives are necessary to land the “big deal”. The recent Dell location is a perfect example. While Dell will benefit the entire region from an employment and notoriety perspective, Winston-Salem and Forsyth County will bear virtually all of the incentive costs. They do not view this as a particular problem though, as they regard the spin off benefits of Dell causing tax base growth in their jurisdictions as a prize worth the investment. This is a good example of the economic model not matching up well with the public sector model.

Until we make more progress working together as a region, we will remain handicapped against our competition. If we are to truly develop our regional approach, we need to work hard on the structures and systems in both the private and public arenas. The Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) is a good example of how to proceed. It is an agency with a true regional focus on a crucial element of our economy – transportation and transit planning and management. Most important, it has legal authority to carry out some important activities, including generation of necessary funds. We need to pursue similar approaches in other key areas such as water and sewer, solid waste disposal, land use planning, environmental issues (air and water quality), and community amenities such as parks and recreation facilities. On the business side, similar efforts are needed regarding incentives, business recruitment, and efficiencies in carrying out daily economic development activities. But until the systems and structures--organizational and financial (including taxes and other public revenues) are addressed, seizing the opportunities is going to be difficult.

As stated in the introduction, it may make sense to implement some of the strategies proposed in this plan on a regional basis. For example, the new emphasis on high impact, high growth entrepreneurial businesses might be executed within the PTEN structure. If this approach is chosen for cost efficiency or other reasons, Greensboro still needs to achieve the intended results and allocate resources accordingly.

Appendix B**STRUCTURING THE PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATION  
TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN**

As noted in the introduction to this plan, carrying out these initiatives will require new and/or reallocated resources within the Partnership and a multi-year timeframe. This could include reorganization of staff. The task of deciding on and implementing any such changes is the prerogative of the Board, its new CEO and management staff. We do, however, have some observations and thoughts we believe may be helpful in making those decisions. They fall in four key areas: Identity, Funding, Staffing and Measurement of Results.

**IDENTITY**

When merger of the three entities took place, the umbrella agency was tentatively named the Greensboro Partnership. While that name, in and of itself, might have a nice ring to it, it has added to local confusion about the distinct identities and functions of our economic development organizations. One of the three operating groups is called the Greensboro Economic Development Partnership and we also have a Piedmont Triad Partnership. With the merger now nearly a year underway, coupled with a new strategic plan for the overall effort, now is the time to clear up this confusion. The Board might consider either a new name for the “umbrella” organization or some change in one or more of the operating groups. Whatever changes are made, the final structure should be marketed throughout the community in a manner that facilitates easily understood roles and functions.

**FUNDING**

This plan recommends several new staff roles, including some high level management positions. It also recommends new programs that will require substantial funding. If the community (business, foundation, and/or governmental) gets excited about the potential payoff of some of these initiatives, additional dollars may be forthcoming for some of the efforts. More likely, a reallocation of existing resources will be necessary. One thorny issue that currently exists is the fact that most of the money currently contributed for the three operating groups is tacitly restricted to the respective groups. This situation could greatly inhibit the flexibility needed to continue current valuable efforts and simultaneously initiate newly recommended actions. Similar issues naturally arise about staff resources and structure.

Whatever decisions are finally made concerning use of existing or new funds, we believe strongly that resource allocation decisions should be driven by the mission and specific plans of the organization, rather than “what has been”. There are multiple ways to organize and budget. The important consideration is how those ways are aligned with mission, objectives and strategies, including those in this strategic plan if adopted. The Board, via its Executive Committee and CEO, should carefully analyze the alignments and make the necessary changes to best achieve the desired outcomes.

**STAFFING**

While a well functioning Board that is clear about policy and strategy is key to any effective organization, there is no substitute for a high performing staff that understands the plan

and has appropriate resources to carry it out. We believe there is an abundance of talent within the staffs of the three operating groups. But positions may not be designed properly and aligned wisely with the desired activities and outcomes. Assessment of staffing is a job for the CEO and management staff, with a clear mandate and ongoing support from the Board to organize for results. We urge the Board to ensure that proper attention is given to sound position design and placement of talent throughout the organization. Perhaps most important, we urge the Board to set strong expectations for close teamwork among the staffs of operating groups or any other divisions of responsibility which result from the merger. A good working knowledge of others' responsibilities and effective teamwork among staff functions should be a top priority charge to the new CEO.