

2.0 VISION STATEMENT

2.1 THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE VISION

This chapter presents the Vision Statement developed in the first phase of the planning process to define the kind of place citizens want Greensboro to be 20 or more years in the future. In considering this Vision Statement, it is important to understand its perspective, context, and role in the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement expresses citizens' **aspirations for the future of Greensboro**. Because it describes the future as citizens choose for it to exist, it is written from the perspective of someone in 2025 observing the character of Greensboro and reflecting on the past 20 years of progress – progress guided by the Goals, Policies, and Action Plan set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.



The Vision Statement should be clearly distinguished from the topical elements (Land Use, Community Character, etc.) of the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement expresses our values and motivations – what we intend to achieve by 2025 – while the elements (together with the concluding Implementation chapter) set out in detail how we intend to achieve the vision. It is essential to define the “what” before the “how,” just as the “destination” must be defined before the “route” can be mapped out. As we read the Vision Statement and imagine the place citizens wish the City to be in 2025, it is natural to make comparisons with Greensboro as it is now, or as it was in the past. We will distinguish ways in which Greensboro has changed a great deal from ways in which it seems hardly changed at all. Because the Comprehensive Plan will be used to influence change, consider how the Vision Statement embraces change. In so doing, it balances **vigilance** in protecting from unwanted change that which citizens cherish about Greensboro with an **activism** in promoting the desired types of change that will accelerate forward progress.

2.2 CITIZEN INPUT

The level of citizen involvement in providing the input needed to craft the Vision Statement was considerable. Some 140 community stakeholders, representing key civic and business organizations, were interviewed early in the planning process. Over 420 citizens participated in seven community forums to discuss issues facing the City and approximately 1,800 citizens returned "postcard" survey forms, indicating preferences for Greensboro's future. From this input the following key areas of community consensus emerged as key themes to be articulated in the Vision Statement:



Community Forum

- ***Quality of Life and Livability:*** to maintain quality housing, safe neighborhoods, and good services and facilities, and to promote civic-mindedness and volunteer tradition.
- ***Community Character:*** to enhance the beauty of Greensboro by protecting tree cover, parks, scenic open spaces, natural resources, and historic heritage; and by setting standards for quality.
- ***Infrastructure Capacity:*** to ensure the ability to meet future needs for water, wastewater treatment, storm drainage, and solid waste management.
- ***Economic Development:*** to diversify the economy, attract good jobs, retain youth, capitalize on the City's strategic location, and promote healthy investment and business development, particularly in underserved areas such as East Greensboro.
- ***Balance and Equity:*** to correct inequities, promote participation by all races and cultures, and make decisions that reflect the best interests of all citizens of Greensboro.
- ***Management of Growth:*** to guide and set high standards for sustainable development patterns, to protect community character and resources, and to promote sound investment throughout Greensboro.

- ***Transportation:*** to maintain the convenience of the road system, avoid congestion, and promote alternatives to reliance on the automobile and improve transit opportunities.
- ***Public Education:*** to invest in our children's future by supporting Guilford County public schools in providing the best possible quality of education.
- ***Higher Education:*** to work in partnership with colleges and universities to promote sound economic development and enrich community life.
- ***Center City:*** to maintain a vibrant, healthy urban center that is the heart of Greensboro's civic life, a source of community pride, a focus of citizens' identity, and a reflection of our historic character.

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee with the assistance of the Consultant Team drafted the Vision Statement based upon the public input. The Vision Statement was adopted by City Council on July 17, 2001.

2.3 VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision of Greensboro and its environs in the Year 2025 is one in which the City is recognized throughout the nation as an exceptional place in which to live, work, play and nurture future generations. It is this exceptional livability which defines our identity, contributes to our civic pride, and offers opportunities for all to participate fully in community life. We have achieved our vision by retaining and building on our heritage, embracing positive growth and change, and by balancing our priorities for:



The Blandwood Mansion

- ***The quality of our relationships with each other.*** We are a caring and welcoming community that values equity for all races and cultures and our shared identity as proud citizens of Greensboro.

- ***The quality of the place.*** We are a community which cherishes and protects its historic heritage and scenic natural resources and which sets high standards for the quality and protection of the man-made and natural environment, respectively.
- ***The quality and vitality of the economy.*** As a community we encourage job creation and welcome innovation and investment to create opportunities for all to contribute to and benefit from economic advancement.



This exceptional livability has been achieved by facing up to our challenges, acknowledging and addressing our shortcomings, and by consistent steady progress in realizing our shared vision for the future. Our success is the result of deliberate, purposeful, and unified actions by citizens, government, businesses, and institutions, which have accepted responsibility to work in partnership to realize our collective vision of what Greensboro can and should be. These actions have been strategically targeted towards four fundamental elements of the vision:

- Community Character
- Sustainable Growth
- Economic Prosperity
- Our People, Organizations, and Government

Community Character

- We have kept the "Green" in Greensboro; by valuing and protecting our tree canopy, forests, streams, rural vistas, air and water quality, and other irreplaceable **natural and scenic resources**.
- Our **safe, well-maintained, livable neighborhoods** meet the basic needs of residents for a clean environment; decent, affordable housing; and convenient access to quality services such as shopping, parks, schools, and community facilities.
- Our proactive approach to crime prevention includes diverse initiatives such as those for community/police partnerships and economic empowerment, leading to a well-deserved reputation as the **safest city** in America.

- We respect our **history and heritage** by preserving historic sites, buildings, and districts; by honoring landmark events, and by interpreting Greensboro's history for present and future generations.
- Greensboro's active **cultural life** – our museums, the arts, cultural festivals, and other events – is a source of community pride and shared experience for our diverse population.
- The **visual character** and image of the City has been enhanced through careful attention to our major roadway and scenic corridors, activity centers, gateways, landmarks, greenways, and other features that act as community “form-givers.”
- A network of accessible **parks and open spaces** provides high quality recreational and leisure opportunities for residents.
- Our **standards for development quality** reflect the special character we choose to maintain.



Sustainable Growth

Throughout Greensboro we see...

- **Balanced investment** and reinvestment across the City, creating quality urban, suburban, and rural places that offer a choice of setting and lifestyle.
- **Compact development patterns** that incorporate mixed land uses and densities and which encourage transit, biking, and walking as convenient alternatives to automobile use.
- **Recycled vacant sites and buildings** that have been encouraged by supportive development policies.



- A **functional, well integrated transportation system** that provides connections and choices for citizens to move about Greensboro and the Triad, including convenient bus and light rail linkages.
- **Infrastructure systems** such as sewer, water, solid waste management, and other critical resources provided to meet long-term needs, positively influence development patterns, promote conservation, and place no undue burdens on particular parts of the City.

At **Greensboro's edges** we see...

- Effective use of growth management tools to promote **wise, balanced, and equitable growth** while protecting rural lands from premature development and inefficient sprawl.
- Coordination of **development and infrastructure investment policies** by the City, Guilford County, area municipalities, and other regional entities.



At **Greensboro's center** we see...

- A **vibrant Center City**, active day and night, that serves as the heart of our economic, cultural, and civic life and reflects our historic heritage.
- **Reclaimed buildings and revitalized neighborhoods and commercial areas.**
- A **balanced mix of uses and activities**, including employment, close-in urban housing, pedestrian-oriented shopping, and lively districts and activity centers for entertainment, the arts, education, sports, and recreation.



In **other areas** of the city where needs had not been met we see...

- **Rejuvenated areas** that have attracted new investment and are vital and prosperous parts of our community, and which address past inequities and deficiencies. A more **balanced approach** to capital investment in these historically underserved parts of our community.
- **Actions and resources** committed to the task.
- **Citizens energized and empowered** as full participants in the life of the community.



Southside Neighborhood



Economic Prosperity

- The City's economic growth has produced business and employment **opportunities for all**, leading to the empowerment of those who have not previously participated fully in the economic life of the community and to the retention of our talented youth.
- Through effective incentives and investment policies, we have achieved a more **balanced development pattern** serving all neighborhoods and quadrants of the City, particularly in areas such as East Greensboro, which had been underserved by certain desired types of development.
- Greensboro has succeeded in transitioning to a **diverse new economy** by promoting "home-grown" businesses and entrepreneurs and by welcoming into the community some of the world's leading corporations and institutions.
- We have succeeded in economic development by **building on our strengths**: our highly trained and motivated **workforce**, our institutions of **higher learning**, our **strategic** transportation and communications location, and our reputation for **livability**.

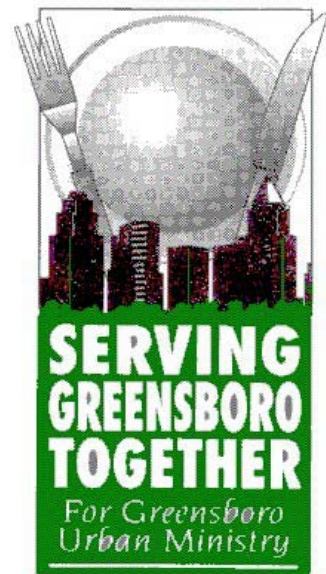


- In choosing to promote employment and investment, we carefully **balance** the value of **economic development**, and its benefits to all Greensboro citizens, with the **protection of natural resources** and community character.
- We are proud of our reputation as a **business-friendly community**, where clear standards, coupled with user-friendly regulatory policies and wise public investments in transportation and infrastructure, attract long-term private investment.
- Major investments by businesses have strengthened the local **tax base**, allowing the City to maintain moderate tax rates.
- We have carefully monitored, identified and promoted **sites and districts** for appropriate types of economic development, including but not limited to, urban area infill and redevelopment, technology and office parks, and industrial development adjacent to major transportation facilities.



Our People, Organizations, and Government

- Greensboro is a **friendly, welcoming community** that invites newcomers to join us and participate fully in the life and prosperity of the community.
- Greensboro celebrates its **racial and cultural diversity** and creates opportunities for all citizens through a **commitment to inclusiveness**.
- Greensboro retains its strong heritage of **citizen involvement, volunteerism, and caring for others**. Major foundations, faith-based groups, and other community organizations are unified by the common vision and strategic direction provided by the Comprehensive Plan.
- Greensboro retains its **strong heritage for healthcare and health facilities** and will continue to **encourage and promote quality and affordable healthcare** for all its citizens.



- Greensboro has responded to the challenge to foster a new generation of **community leaders**, who are committed to principles of empowerment, equity, innovation, collaboration, and civic pride.
- Greensboro has recognized that its most valuable resources are its children, by encouraging and promoting excellence in the **Guilford County public school system** and continuing citizen volunteer support.
- The City’s **institutions of higher education** are active resources and partners in initiatives to expand economic opportunities, stimulate innovation, and promote lifelong learning.
- **City government** retains its reputation for providing a high level of service and has made great strides in exercising leadership, responding to the concerns of citizens, and challenging them to become involved in community affairs.
- The City has taken a leadership role in monitoring regional conditions and in promoting greater **intergovernmental coordination** with the State of North Carolina, Guilford County, neighboring communities, and other regional entities.



Photo courtesy of Guilford County Schools

