

Streetscape renovations improve curb appeal in downtown Greensboro

If you're like most people, you probably can't remember exactly what was on the ballot in 2016 and how you voted. That was the year when Greensboro voters approved a bond issue to finance some much-needed improvements to downtown's transportation infrastructure.

Planning the work took a while, and shortages associated with the pandemic set the schedule back a bit, but now work has begun in earnest.

Over the coming months, crews will focus on specific projects within the downtown area that are designed to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and create spaces that can more easily accommodate festival events.

One-way traffic flow on a section of Greene Street near Phil G. McDonald Governmental Plaza will be altered to become two-way.

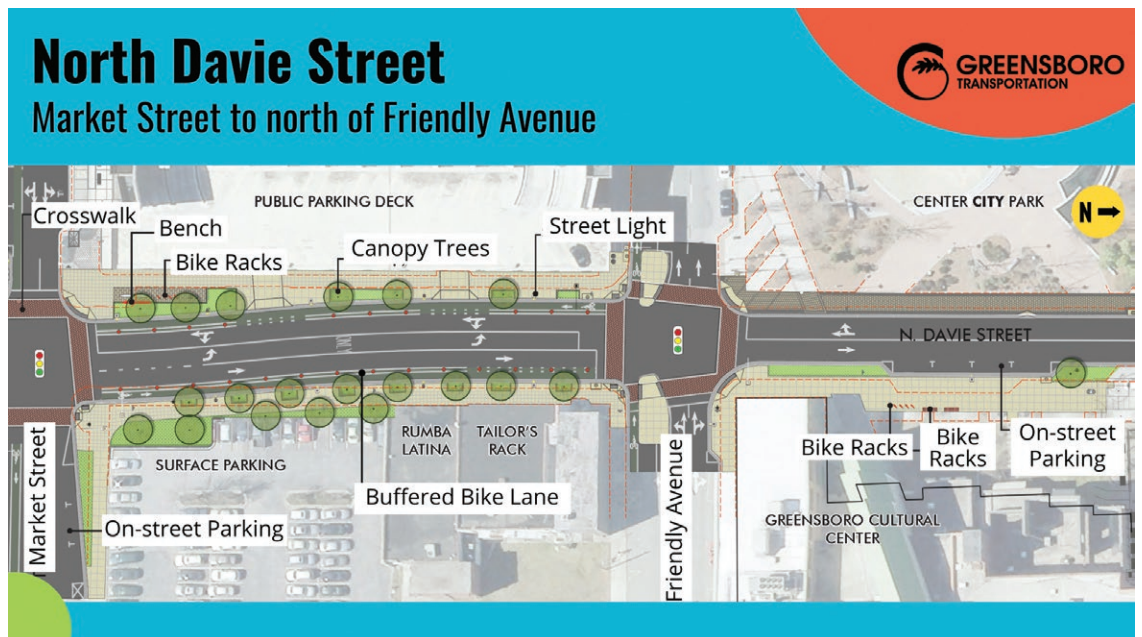
Voters authorized the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan, with a budget of \$25 million. The initial schedule called for completing construction by fall 2024, but supply chain issues have helped extend the timeline.

Pipes made of ductile iron – the sort used for water mains – have been back-ordered for up to 25 months, says Hanna Cockburn, the city's director of transportation. Remaking streets and tearing up asphalt, she says, is a perfect opportunity to do some preventive maintenance.

"Our water and sewer pipes, in some places, are more than 100 years old,"



Cockburn



she says. "Making these targeted investments also allows us to invest in the invisible, but really important, infrastructure that's under the road."

Here are some highlights of the streetscape projects.

Buffered bike lanes

Many city streets use paint to designate lanes for cyclists. A buffered bike lane is the next level of safety separation. In addition to the visual separation of a paint stripe, a row of flexible, vertical stanchions creates a physical barrier between lanes for vehicles and lanes for bikes.

"We're providing the most safe facility that we can for all roadway users," says Cock-

burn, who spent years walking and cycling to work.

Street festival elements

The 400 block of Belmeade Street, near First National Bank Field, will be outfitted with features that will make the street easily adaptable for festivals and other functions with high concentrations of pedestrians. The traditional curb will be replaced with a more gentle slope, similar to that found on curbs at LeBauer Park.

Decorative pavers will give sidewalks more eye appeal. Benches will offer streetside seating, while grade-level planters will introduce foliage to soften the hardscape.



Planter installed at grade level.

Protective bollards will separate traffic areas from pedestrians, and stringlights will add atmosphere after sundown.

Tree-friendly elements

Trees will be planted in newly created spaces, called tree wells, that break up curbside parking areas. Below the surface will be a "soil

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Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.



Time to catch up

Colleen Biedny of Carolina Cookie Co. (center) chats with Alison Huber of Dynamic Quest during a break at a recent Teach Me Tuesday event at GMA headquarters. Teach Me Tuesday events, on a variety of business topics, are led by industry professionals. And they're free for all GMA members to attend. Check the GMA calendar of events at mygma.org for details on upcoming events.



Sometimes a pup just wants to go where everybody knows his name

Paula Dozier is attempting to pose for a photo and not spill her beer when one of her many canine friends hops up to slather her with affection. And by affection, we mean dog kisses.

Lucy Lukens, a Golden Doodle and member at Doggos Dog Park and Pub, loves Dozier, and vice versa.

Meanwhile, the other clientele at Doggos are having their own good times on a weekday afternoon – racing about, dog wres-

tling, panting, sniffing, and romping over the artificial turf in the spacious play yard sandwiched between Battleground Avenue and Grecale Street. A chain-link fence that not even a deer could jump keeps everyone safe.

The dogs' owners are there, too. Plus some dog-less people who come just to enjoy the sociable canines hanging out at their own exclusive club. Only well-behaved dogs are allowed at Doggos.

"We're just trying to bring a little fun to the world," says Dozier, founder and owner of Doggos. "Fun is so underrated. Like dogs, and fun, and beer, together. It's just a whole different place."

Different, too, because there's minimal barking and yapping. Most of the dogs know one another and visit often, brought by owners who have incorporated Doggos as an important "third place" in their lives.

"Our purpose is to create communities of good dogs and good people," Dozier says. "To create this place where people can connect – not your work and not your home — is really important. And that's a hard thing to find in the world. We really try to be the third place."

Doggos, which opened in a "proof of concept" space in 2019 and moved to its current location a year later, is Dozier's second start-up.

She graduated from college just in time for the recession of 2008-09 and couldn't find employment. So she started a concierge service and ran it for several years before selling the business in 2016. She became a GMA member while running the concierge service, she says, and found many of her clients through networking with other members.

Dozier gave corporate life a try but gave it up after a couple of years. "Too much red tape," she explains.

She was on a flight to see her grandmother, sipping a Bloody Mary, and mourning the passing of her beloved dog when she had a flash of inspiration.

"Wouldn't it be amazing if there was a place where people and dogs could just be together? Where you can hang out with dogs and experience them, and then not have to take them

NEW MEMBER



Paula Dozier, founder and owner of Doggos Dog Park and Pub, with Barkley Spencer, a Corgi and member who visits Doggos often.

home with you?"

That was what her soul yearned for, as she was still grieving and not yet ready to bring another dog into her life permanently.

"I had never heard of anything like that," Dozier says. "It just felt like the right moment to try something crazy."

Doggos is not a doggie daycare center. It's not a place to wash your dog. It's basically a membership club for dogs, with monthly or annual dues. Owners are admitted at no charge.

A day pass (\$10) is available for canines who want to inspect the dog park. All dogs must have proof of vaccinations and mind their manners.

Canines over a year old must be spayed or neutered. Humans are advised to check the website and rules for people as well as for dogs before showing up with a best friend on a leash.

Doggos was the second commercial dog park and pub to open in North Carolina, she says. Nationally, there are about 100 different brands or concepts looking for a foothold. As a pioneer, she gets calls from other interested entrepreneurs almost daily.

Dozier has hired a manager, who looks after day-to-operations with a staff of 14. And she's rejoined GMA.

She's brimming with "dog-centric" ideas to get more people and their

dogs involved in creating memories. That's how the summertime Puppy Prom came about, and Harry Potter Weekend, complete with Hogwarts Houses for the dogs, and quidditch.

It's all about creating unique experiences, she says, "helping people live with their dogs in a more memorable life."

And it's about business, too.

"One day, I would like to turn Doggos into a franchise," she says.

Doggos Dog Park and Pub
1214 Battleground Ave.
336-285-8700
doggosparkandpub.com



Max Chadmon, a mixed-breed rescue dog, was crowned 2022's Prom King. He was outfitted as a hip-hop star for the Totally 2000's theme, complete with a gold chain and initial M.



Lucy Lukens and Lincoln Kaufman (both are Golden Doodles). They were outfitted as Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake in matching denim outfits for the 2022 Puppy Prom. Doggos' proms are fund-raisers for other dog-centric organizations, such as the Triad SPCA and Guilford County Animal Services.



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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.

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Got your ticket? GMA's Annual Dinner, with football star Emmitt Smith, is March 27

GMA's 117th Annual Dinner will be March 27 at the Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, featuring former NFL running back Emmitt Smith.

Smith, who spent 13 seasons with the Dallas Cowboys, owns three Super Bowl championship rings and remains the NFL record-holder for most career rushing yards.

The Annual Dinner is the social event of the year and the occasion that marks the transition of leader-

ship as the new chairman of the board takes over.

A social hour precedes the event in the hotel's largest banquet hall.

Smith was a first-round NFL draft pick in 1990 after choosing to forego his senior year at the University of Florida.

He's the only running back to



Smith

win a Super Bowl championship, the NFL rushing crown, the NFL Most Valuable Player award, and the Super Bowl MVP Award, all in the same season (1993).

Smith, the father of five, won ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" during its third season. He's the author of "Game On," an account of the principles that guided him to success in football as well as in his other endeavors.

He also has a North Carolina

connection. Smith is a co-owner of Jesse Iwuji Motorsports.

The Mooresville-based NASCAR team races in the Xfinity Series and has a STEM education outreach program designed to bring more diversity and inclusion into the sport.

Annual Dinner tickets are available online at mygma.org.

For additional information, contact GMA Vice President Michelle Bolick at 336-378-6350.



Name: Gus Gastineau
Residence: Pleasant Garden
Hometown: Climax
Age: 29
Education: B.A., Business Management and Ethics, John Wesley U.
Business: Piedmont Federal Savings Bank
Role: Mortgage loan officer



Responsibilities:

I help people with a mortgage on their home, whether they're a first-time home buyer or if they've purchased several homes and gone through the mortgage process several times. As a loan officer, I love to help people.

On GMA :

One of my teammates, Ken Esposito, asked me to go to

a networking event with him. It was just a great time. We got to play the infamous sticker game. I met a ton of people and just really enjoyed it.

On Risers:

I really enjoy meeting people who are in a similar life stage, people about my age who may be newer in their career, and just getting to collaborate and network with people who are go-getters.

Personal:

I enjoy hiking, volleyball, and playing disc golf. I'm very involved in my church life. We have one child who's a year and a half, and we've got twins that are due in September.

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Center City insights



Catherine Johnson of Guilford County's Family Justice Center was the featured speaker at GMA's Center City AM Briefing on February 14. Johnson provided an update on the agency, which assists victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse. Among other presenters was Carol Ghiorso Hart (below), director of the Greensboro History Museum.



Soothing massage

Massage therapist Emily Miller, with Kneaded Energy, gives a massage to a GMA member during the March 10 Free Day Friday event at GMA headquarters. Lights were low and soft music played in the Community Room, which usually buzzes with activity. GMA members who signed up in advance were treated to a 20-minute massage, with GMA picking up the tab. Be on the lookout for announcements of future Free Day Friday offers. All are free member benefits.



Her employers and industries have changed in an evolving career, but GMA membership has been constant

Unfortunately, there is no video of that moment. No recording of the new GMA member's reaction to four women, all costumed as ladybugs, sweeping into that place of business to deliver a GMA welcome packet.

But Kathy Haines, one of the ladybugs, remembers what the new member said.

"Are we on 'Candid Camera'?"

You have to be of a certain age to remember that popular TV show from the 1960s, perhaps the first reality show. "Candid Camera" captured people's reactions to wacky, improbable situations – like a bevy of grown-up women, dressed as ladybugs, swarming into a workplace.

The ladybugs traveled about Greensboro in Alison Schwartz's VW Beetle, which inspired the costumes.

Costumes were necessary because the blitz to deliver welcome packets to new members was a contest for the volunteers. Each team had to choose a theme and dress accordingly.

And after all, what's cuter than a ladybug? Four ladybugs, of course.

"We looked pretty crazy," Haines admits, pulling photos

LOYAL MEMBER

from her cellphone as proof. "But you know, that's just part of the fun."

The fun is one of the reasons that Haines has been an active GMA member since 1988.

"I love the fact that they interject fun into their daily activities," she says. "You know, the After Work Networks, the Noontime Networks. They serve you food. They play 'the sticker game.'"

The sticker game eases introductions and that initial exchange of information. But that's just the beginning.

"You're going to have a couple-minute conversation with that person, find out a little bit about them," Haines says. "That's true networking at its best."

Haines was introduced to GMA when she entered the cellphone industry as a sales person. GMA's networking opportunities helped her achieve success and remain successful over more than a decade as cellphone companies merged



These three ladybugs from 2016 are still GMA members: Stephanie Ward of Print Plus, Kathy Haines of Kathy Haines Homes, and Alison Schwartz of All Pets Considered.



Kathy Haines has been a GMA member since 1988.

and expanded and went through numerous name changes.

"I met clients," she says. "And future friends too."

GMA membership remained crucial to Haines when she switched to the real estate industry in 1999. After more than two decades of working for other real estate agencies, she opened her own shop in September 2021. Kathy Haines Homes is affiliated with eXp Realty, an international firm with 90,000 agents in the United States.

Haines calls GMA's Annual Dinner "the networking event

of the year. All the movers and shakers are there."

She initially had thought she would miss the 2023 Annual Dinner because of a scheduling conflict. But while speaking with GMA Vice President Michelle Bolick, she realized she had her dates mixed up. She'd be able to attend the March 27 event after all. And she instantly decided she'd share the fun.

"Put me down for a table," she told Bolick.

Kathy Haines Homes

336-339-2000

kathyhaines.com

Clients depend on FirstPoint Collection Resources to resolve bad debts

First in a series

FirstPoint, a sister company to GMA which shares the same chief executive and board of directors, has three divisions – Collection and Call Center Resources, Background Screening Resources, and Management Resources.

The roots of Collection and Call Center Resources go back to 1949, when the Credit Bureau of Greater Greensboro was established as a business unit of the Greensboro Merchants Association.

"The Credit Bureau sold credit reports, and there was a collection division that collected bad debts," says Bill Howard, the FirstPoint senior vice president who leads Collection and Call Center Resources. He joined FirstPoint in 2012.

Collection Resources is licensed to do business nationwide, he says, but primarily serves customers in the Southeast.

Clients turn to Collection Re-



Howard

sources to recover monies owed for services or goods provided to customers.

Examples include hospitals, consumer banking, property management, and all types of utilities.

"We're often talking to people whose backs are against the wall, financially," Howard says. "We want to be a calming source for them, to help them figure out their future and work with them through paying off their accounts."

Howard says Collection Resources staffers are highly trained to provide "quality communications with consumers." It's critical, he says, to

maintain a high degree of professionalism and be compliant with industry regulations.

Clear, respectful communications provide a foundation to help consumers work out payment plans, he says.

Collection Resources employs a staff of 80. The division also handles call center services for utilities and other industries.

"Our No. 1 asset is our employees," Howard says.

FirstPoint Collection Resources

800-288-7408

info@firstpointresources.com

Relocation Guide helps newcomers, businesses connect

Somewhere between 800 and 2,000 people move to the Piedmont Triad every month, says Kimberly Vaughan, who makes it her business to know such things.

Whether they come from Wilmington or San Francisco, each one eventually will need to connect with Triad vendors of goods and services of all sorts.

A newcomer from out of state probably will need one or more types of insurance – renter's, homeowner's, auto.

How will they choose a new dentist, or florist, or house painter?

What about daycare for the 2-year-old or a veterinarian for the kitty?

Where's the nearest kosher deli or Pilates trainer?

No matter where they settle, newcomers need to learn a lot, often quickly, to get established in a community.

Newcomers can find an-

**PARTICIPATION
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swers to questions like these in The Original Relocation Guide of North Carolina.

Vaughan is an associate publisher for the guide, which was founded 23 years ago in Raleigh. There are now eight versions published for different regions throughout the state, including an edition for the Piedmont Triad.

The Triad edition is updated every six months, with 70,000 copies published annually. Statewide, the Relocation Guide pumps out 500,000 copies a year.

You may have seen Relocation Guides in a rack at your favorite supermarket.

"We have roughly 600 free rack locations in each territory," Vaughan says.

If you're a new hire at Cone Health or Honda Jet or oodles



Kimberly Vaughan, associate publisher of the Relocation Guide.

of other major employers in the area, you were handed a Relocation Guide to help ease the transition to life in the Triad, she says.

Vaughan has been with the Relocation Guide for five years. When she saw that a position as associate publisher was available, she

instantly recognized it as a valuable opportunity – in large part because the Relocation Guide had helped her so much when she moved to North Carolina 15 years ago.

"I couldn't believe how chock-full of information it was," she recalls. "It helped

me through a really rough time as I was trying to transition to a new area."

The Relocation Guide collects demographic data from people who register on its website, Vaughan says. That information is then provided to advertisers so that they may reach out to newcomers in their area.

"I can help people relocating here and help businesses, as well," she says.

Vaughan has been a GMA member for some four years now. "GMA is wonderful at not only connecting and networking with other people," she says, "but they make you feel at home. It's really helped me tremendously, to meet people and get my name out there."

GMA connections also helped her find a painter for her home. "There's everything in the group," she says.

Kimberly Vaughan
336-350-1718

The Original Relocation Guide
Relocationguide.biz

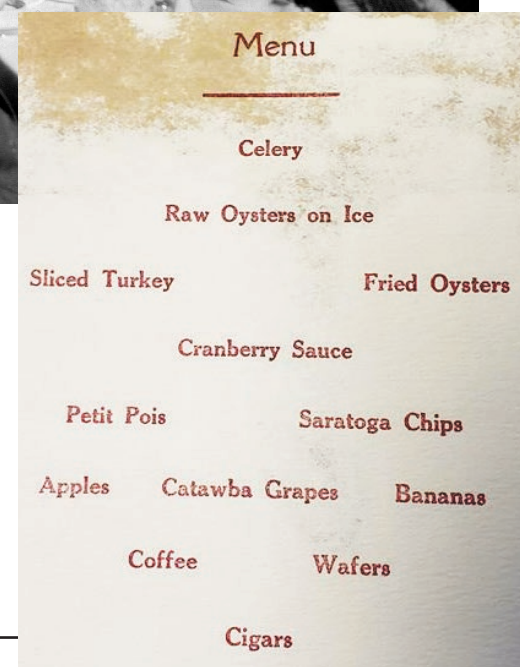


The original O. Henry Hotel was the scene of the 1933 Annual Dinner. The hotel, built in 1919, stood at the southwest corner of Bellemeade and North Elm streets. It was razed in 1979.

GMA's Annual Dinner has always been a major event

The 2023 Annual Dinner is March 27 at the Sheraton Greensboro Hotel. For more details, see page 4.

The menu from the first annual dinner, held in 1907, is preserved in GMA's archives. Through the decades, the Annual Dinner has remained one of the year's top events for civic and business leaders in Guilford County.



Should you be worried that ChatGPT might eliminate your job?

By KEIR DAVIS

The past 80 years have brought many technological advancements to the workplace. Among the most transformative were the inventions of desktop computing, the internet, and mobile technology. It appears that ChatGPT may be the latest in transformative technology.



Davis

ChatGPT is an artificial

BUSINESS SUCCESS

intelligence (AI) chatbot developed by a company named OpenAI.

AI has existed in some form since the 1950s. It is not a new technology. The term AI refers to a machine with the ability to perceive, synthesize, or infer information. We encounter AI on a daily basis. Common examples include maps & navigation, text auto-correct, and chatbots.

The difference with Chat-

GPT is that it is infinitely better than any other AI at taking disparate information sources and coming to conclusions.

In other words, it can “think” in a more advanced way than previous AI. As a result, it is being utilized in increasingly advanced settings that were previously the domain of humans. This is quite possibly the first disruptive technology facing white collar workers and is causing concern.

This begs the obvious question: Will ChatGPT impact my job?

On a long enough time scale, the answer is yes. As of now, ChatGPT is useful in specific, narrowly focused areas, and is not a general-purpose piece of technology. It is likely to improve efficiency and accuracy in a variety of areas, for example, reviewing dense legal files and documents. But humans will still be needed for quality control, to understand situational nuances, and to foster human connections.

And as with any technological innovation, another outcome is the creation of

new jobs. For example, Social Media Manager is now a standard job at companies of every shape and size. This was not the case 20 years ago.

It should be exciting to see the ways in which ChatGPT creates jobs and impacts our modern workplace in the years to come.

Keir Davis is president of Greensboro-based Xtern Software.

www.xternsoftware.com
336-574-3731



Welcome GMA's newest members

GMA regularly holds orientation sessions for new members. February's orientation class was extra large, with about twice as many new members present as usual. In the front row (from left) are Susan Watts, Stephanie Moran, Nikol and Connie Vinson, all with Blue Ridge Companies; Summer Wall, NXT Level Construction; William Chappell, Banker's Life; Forrest Howard, The Kimpton Cardinal Hotel; and Connor Christensen, Tuggle Duggins. Back row: Neville De Lucia, Dale Carnegie of Central & Eastern N.C.; Sebastian Grundseth, TCC Junk Removal; James Gray, Gray Home Inspections; Mason Eades, TCC Junk Removal; Chris Tippens, NXT Level Construction; Reinier Smit, Tuggle Duggins; Tim Geldner, N.C. Farm Bureau Insurance; Stuart Mease, ROCS Grad Staffing; Nick Raimondi, Starr Electric; and David Mohamed, Dale Carnegie of Central & Eastern N.C.

Streetscape renovations

Continued from page 1

cell system,” creating space to nourish tree roots. Trees planted closer to areas with foot traffic may have decorative grates covering the soil.

Davie streetscape

Canopy trees will be planted on the north end of Davie Street, adding greenery to the block with the Davie



Example of a decorative tree grate.

Street Parking Deck. Bike racks will be plentiful. To the south, sidewalks will be widened and traffic lanes made more narrow to encourage a slower pace. Angled parking will be introduced near the former News & Record site, and a buffered bike lane will help keep cyclists safe on both ends of Davie Street.

The philosophy guiding the projects, Cockburn says, is to improve the biking and pedestrian environment for downtown residents and visitors, “to really draw them into the center city.”

The links below provide more details on Greensboro's streetscape renovation plans.

Bellemeade-Eugene overview

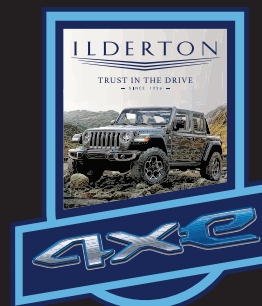
<https://tinyurl.com/49er9c7w>

Greene Street lane conversion

<https://tinyurl.com/2p844rzv>

Davie Street overview

<https://tinyurl.com/9zjaf5k2>



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