

Guilford County Community Forums

Summary Report

Submitted by
The HR Group, Inc.
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216-4 S. Swing Road • Greensboro, NC 27409 • (336) 292-1911
www.thehrgroupinc.net

I. Background

During the month of May, The HR Group Inc. facilitated eight community forum meetings with local citizens throughout Guilford County. The forums were conducted at the following locations:

Bethel AME Church	May 7, 2007
Oak Ridge Town Hall	May 8, 2007
Southwest High School	May 8, 2007
Grimsley High School	May 15, 2007
Northeast High School	May 15, 2007
Southern High School	May 15, 2007
Bur-Mil Park	May 22, 2007
Andrews High School	May 22, 2007

Attendance at the forums ranged from approximately 20-30 people at most sessions to a high of over 100 at the first session at Bethel AME Church. The citizens that attended were very open in their suggestions regarding how things could be improved in the county. The issues and feedback collected during the sessions were gathered using a question/answer format structured around a traditional SWOT methodology. Specifically, attendees were asked to give responses to questions posed by the facilitators that would help to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that the county may face now and in the future. Each session was attended by county administrative staff and also a county commissioner from each respective district. The commissioner of each district had the opportunity to make opening and closing comments during the forum sessions. Most of the sessions lasted approximately one and a half hours and attendees were thanked for the active participation and attendance.

II. Overall Themes

While the feedback from citizens varied slightly depending on the location of the forum session, there were some overall themes that could be drawn from the comments compiled from all the sessions. These themes are based on specific comments being mentioned at more than two forum sessions. They are according to the SWOT format:

A. Strengths - The County is perceived as being an attractive place to live overall and particularly when one considers its major strengths which are:

- System of higher education
- Emergency services
- Healthcare system
- Parks and recreation

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- Natural resources of the area
- Size of cities
- County social services
- Infrastructure, roads, etc.

The above strengths were consistently mentioned across the majority of the forum sessions and are not listed in any particular rank order. In addition to these strengths, additional ones that were not mentioned repeatedly can be found on the attached individual forum sheets. Similarly, supplemental comments can be found on the respective forum sheets for the other SWOT categories.

B. Weaknesses – The County is perceived as having the following overall weaknesses:

- Lack of coordination between the government entities to address common community issues and reduce redundancies
- Lack of regionalism among the county's communities/government authorities in order to encourage new businesses and create more jobs. This would also help to retain graduates from local universities.
- Lack of cohesiveness among the county commissioners and their ability to get things done in a diplomatic/timely manner and without racial overtones.
- Lack of control of economic development to avoid uncontrolled growth and its impact on the environment, community infrastructure, etc.
- Uneven distribution of economic development in certain parts of the county.
- Lack of public transportation across the county.
- Lack of access to public libraries throughout the county.
- Need more investment in secondary educational school system to avoid issues like over crowding, high drop-out rate, student teacher ratio, etc.
- Need more emphasis on crime prevention/education and also resolution of over crowding in the jails.

C. Opportunities – The County is perceived as having the following opportunities to capitalize on its strengths:

- Leverage university educational assets of the community to support economic development more.
- Better use of government owned land and old structures for economic development or community use.

- Support the preservation of land use throughout the county to protect historic sites.
- Provide more incentives to promote and stimulate business entrepreneurship resulting in more high paying jobs.
- Foster more open dialogue between county government and its citizens to encourage collaboration in solving community issues.

D. Threats – The County is perceived as having the following threats that could significantly impact its future:

- Uncontrolled growth in the rural areas adversely impacting the natural resources and character of the county.
- Uncontrolled economic growth over taxing the infrastructure (roads, emergency services, etc.) of the county.
- Failure of county leadership in addressing the perceived racial divide in an open and responsible manner.
- Failure to manage the county's tax base, tax rates, and finances efficiently as we grow.
- Not addressing crime in our schools re drugs, violence, etc.

The major SWOT themes above tend to indicate that the county has a tremendous number of things that are viewed positively by its citizens. It also indicates that they would like to see these strengths leveraged through better collaboration between government entities and all diverse segments of the local community, in order to achieve a higher level of economic growth. By doing this, we will be able to proactively address issues such as job creation, a stable tax base, a better secondary educational school system, more extensive public transportation, crime, and library services. In addition, as this growth occurs, citizens would like the County to be ever mindful of how uncontrolled economic growth can possibly damage the rural areas and character of the County. Therefore, it has to be monitored closely.

Compiled Notes from All Forums

Bethel AME Church

May 7, 2007

Strengths

- Health care availability (best in “world”).
- Parks and recreation.
- Higher education opportunities.
- School security – not an issue.
- Attracting businesses.
- Corporations coming in.
- Buses accessible.
- Local foundations contributions (charitable).
- Transportation – public – city and county.
- School administration tries new things, flexible.
- Funding of Greensboro Public Library – achieve county-wide services.
- Summer programs for children.
- Serves variety of purposes.
- Funding libraries, higher education, construction – schools and city facilities.
- Fire department and emergency response – best in country.
- GTCC – great!
- Building Code enforcement.

Could Improve

- Funds distribution regarding minority economic development.
- Crime prevention.
- More sidewalks (e.g., East Bessemer).
- Youth crime prevention programs (reinstate programs).
- Spend too much on housing criminals vs. prevention programs (e.g., new jail).
- Disparity of strengths/assets throughout the county.
- Need community resources in E. Bessemer.
- Family structure of African American Community – drop outs – trade school options.
- Need more dollars in public school system.
- Need more affordable housing throughout the county.
- More intervention regarding mental health, substance abuse regarding homelessness.
- Utilize “differently abled” better.
- Salary Equity Study in the county and EEO representation.
- Amenities distribution throughout the county.
- Drug use on east side of county.
- Criteria for employment in county government.
- Ex-con rehab programs needed (e.g., apprenticeship programs, etc.).

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- Need county strategy to keep university graduates here.

Opportunities

- Dress code for instructors regarding student behavior.
- Teaching of ex-cons/rehab.
- Strengthen bidding process to distribute contracts, especially \$ thresholds. School Board process is addressing this.
- School transportation, “New light” program – high school funding issue.
- Better use of old school buildings.
- Need building incentives re: black areas.
- Renovation of unused buildings vs. more jails. Also more skill training.
- Need environmental effort throughout the county.
- Broader “listening” consensus re: hiring and firing decisions of high visibility (e.g., County Manager).
- Leverage educational assets even more to support economic development.
- Better use of government owned land vs. buying private land.
- Increase opportunity for better communication.
- Need prayer in school.
- Reduce rural poverty.

Threats

- Have representation at the table from this community.
- Have to deal with the past.
- Have accountability for what we already have.
- School \$, Bond \$, Tax \$ disappeared.
- Black Historical Museum.
- Use taxes for people who really need it.
- Can’t be underhanded to get things (e.g., borrow \$ and give us a bill!).
- We need to show respect for one another – commissioners.
- Why was money taken from New Light?
- Give us hope.
- Politics.
- Hold elected officials accountable.
- Lack of respect/vote/\$ to black community.
- Find foundation \$ for black community.

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Oak Ridge Town Hall
May 8, 2007

Parking Lot

- Businesses that close should remove their building if an eyesore, or consider reuse.

Strengths

- Fire protection/Ambulance Service.
- School system.
- Responsiveness by Townhall.
- Improvement of County Government.
- Stable job base.
- Transparency of government. Forthright regarding concerns.
- Good County Manager.
- Collaboration between local city governments and county.

What can we do better?

- Impact on environment – “green.”
- Create balance between services provided and funding for services (responsibility).
- Coordinating county services, combining services where overlap.
- Maintain character and history of area.
- Too many turf wars – shouldn't focus on who gets credit.
- Governments work closer together.
- Impact of Jordan Lake cleanup.
- Economic growth in local area.
- Risk of overdevelopment.
- Paying too much taxes for service given.
- Drop-out rate and success/failure of education system (county tax \$\$).
- Get locals on Environmental Commission (e.g., Jordan Lake).
- Promoting libraries and parks in all areas of county.
- Be involved to make sure we have adequate roads in NW Guilford County – move up on list (Bryan – 68 – 311 – established before growth takes place).
- Plan schools before growth occurs.
- Infrastructure will attract business.
- Too many boutique programs in schools.
- Balance between development/growth and protecting farms/land.
- Funding CBO's – reconsider.

Opportunities

- e.g., Old Mill, Dover Church and Graveyard – protect historic sites.
- County land purchase and preservation.
- Utilize land that has little use for parks, etc.
- Protect drinking water and land.
- Reuse industrial sites for business purposes (e.g., textiles).
- Reinstate land use planning group (from early 80s).
- Educated work force.

Threats

- Unchecked economic growth regarding land use.
- Crime in schools (drugs, violence, etc.).
- Standard of living, investment in people, libraries.
- More alternative learning school options.
- School Board Administration and fiscal responsibility.
- Declining tax base.
- Illegal immigration in county.
- Grow infrastructure services to keep up with growth (e.g., Sheriff Dept., fire, ambulance, roads).
- Increasing cost of mental health services.
- Ability to attract good teachers.
- Build a jail sooner and use rehabilitation services.

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Southwest High School
May 8, 2007

Strengths

- National resources – national rural areas.
- Natural Science Center.
- Agriculture soils – for tobacco (blessed).
- Great potential to be better.
- Post secondary educational opportunities (5 colleges).
- Low crime rate – feel safe.
- High ecoline Resources.
- Support of the arts – professional and community theaters.

Do Differently

- Fully fund school system – rival Chapel Hill.
- Continue forums – include citizens.
- Place more emphasis on environment – protect water resources.
- Lack of leadership – not clear vision, grandstanding.
- Return calls, email, more responsive communication.
- Schools overcrowded, teachers unsupported.
- Over emphasis on testing, falling through the cracks.
- No one wants to be responsible for education, too many layers, lack of checks and balances.
- Maintain current streets before building on.
- County and city need to pull together on gangs, drugs, put resource officers in schools.
- Put problem kids in own facility.
- Sidewalks – builders contribute towards education.
- So many elected bodies – cities, towns, county – not working.
- Overcrowded – will be 2010 before new school with today's bonds.
- Get elected officials working closer on schools.
- Concern for courts, criminal justice, too many repeat offenders, more work release – could be put to work on roads.
- Need to sentence to hard labor.
- Land use 2002 purposed plan has no residents involved, Heart of Triad only developers, business.
- Heart of Triad work to revitalize towns we have, not build new.
- Use snail mail to get out survey, forum too small.
- Need emphasis on conservation and ecology – there is land that needs to be saved – preservation, should and must be saved.
- Need more parks in this area.

Opportunities – 10 years – 15 years

- Deliberate steps to provide county library services – supplement schools – provide easy access to those outside city areas, including senior citizens and young children.
- Keep college graduates here.
- Revitalize community and industrial areas.
- Potential – every child learn to read by second grade, identify disabled children and try to overcome.
- Enforce Value of Volunteers helping adults learn to read.
- Libraries so parents can read aloud.
- Strengthen libraries in smaller areas – cooperation between community and libraries for people to have access and use computers and resources through libraries.

Challenges

- School system.
- Put in development before streets to get there.
- Get ideas of what's holding us back why people not coming here.
- Pollution of water supply – air, must protect environment.
- Clanish – lack of cooperation, need to think collectively. Will get bigger corporations to come in.
- Increase emphasis on culture.
- Tax structure – make it equitable so all buy-in.
- History of saying “yes” but don't stick with plan when big box comes – business coming in not always good.
- Racial and ethnic categorization – helping people become citizens, not good job of integrating into whole.
- Pockets of poverty.
- How do we promote citizenship – more vocal about legal citizenship.
- Transportation – airfare – buses once an hour – more public transportation – rail mass transit.
- Political environment – stay in stalemate too long, need to work together better.

Summary Report



Grimsley High School
May 15, 2007

What Are We Doing Well?

- Bringing business into the community, including utilities infrastructure to support them.
- Good customer service at Social Services (even when they have bad news – they're nice to you).
- Bus system accessible.
- Guilford Center is open to suggestions.
- Schools doing well in spite of obstacles they face.
- East Market St. beautification complete and an asset.
- Parks and Recreation improvement and purchase of Greensboro Sports Rec.
- Sheriff Barnes doing a good job regarding Prison Farm.
- Fire Department responds quickly.
- Reopening drug services department (ADS) to address serious crack problems.
- Free transportation to job available through Department of Social Services.

What We Can Do Better

- Money spent at Guilford Center for remodeling – should have gone to counseling instead.
- Spending too much tax money to compete with other areas to bring in businesses (incentive programs) – let citizens know what is going on.
- Crime issue – crack addicts in neighborhoods.
- Need congregant care facilities, creative models both here and around the country – need funds and need more of them.
- Increase funding for public education – students in pods, overpopulated – build schools in advance of need.
- Schools cost money – feels like dollars go in a big hole.
- Don't want to use farm land for schools and other uses – housing/shopping centers.
- "Racism" comments by Commissioner Allston don't promote cooperation amongst commissioners.
- County doesn't get funds from state for much needed school services such as low student/teacher ratio in lower grades.
- Guilford Center lost funding for services.
- Better job of educating African-American male students in school system.
- Better job of educating teachers to teach a diverse student body, also parents need more training to help kids.
- Back up of cases in judicial system, "speedy trial" limits are being exceeded.
- Contributes to overcrowding – average length of stay gone from 10 days to 24 days in High Point.
- Many prisoners don't have a voice.

What Opportunities Do We Have?

- Cultural Art Center funding should go towards services, not retail.
- Grocery store downtown to accommodate residents new to area.
- We have no resources in technology or sciences – need a Discovery Center; could attract young people.
- Mass transportation needed – light rail/trolleys between cities.
- Diversity of educational institutions and depth of programs (higher education).
- Health care – how can we put these two areas together (educ. and health care) and connect?
- Join law enforcement groups together to meet needs.
- Organizations that support small businesses could partner with public schools to help kids learn how to start businesses - Jr. Achievement organization could do this.
- Tax breaks and incentives aren't given to our small businesses to promote them and encourage them (e.g., downtown Greensboro especially).
- Summer job programs for kids during summer – 14 years and older – worker permits.

Challenges

- Textile and furniture industries competition requires an entrepreneurial effort.
- Water resources – gaining access to it (Randleman Dam), but must be able to make it usable – purify, recycle, clarify.
- County Commissioners need to work together more productively – represent and make county better – not conduct meetings they way they have been with so much partisanship.
- Spend money on keeping African American males out of prison; educate them so they are more productive.
- If we are to grow the community, we need to take better care of those who cannot afford to take care of themselves.

Parking Lot

- City vs. County needs – where draw the line on addressing needs.

Summary Report



Northeast High School
May 15, 2007

Strengths

- Zoning Commission and way they deliberate zoning changes in an area.
- County willing to use technology, stay on the forefront of technology development and takes advantage of what technology has to offer.
- County trying to preserve green space – working on nice park in my community.
- Comfortable with level of emergency services – Sheriff, Fire, EMS.
- County does very good job with infrastructure – roads, highways, etc. as growth occurs.
- Blessed with institutions of higher learning – very concentrated.

Weaknesses – Problems that needs to be worked on

- Lack of Fiscal responsibility in terms of County Management of personnel.
- Span of control of top management.
- School concerns.
- Overcrowding of jails.
- Identify essential vs. non-essential services and prioritize essential services.
- Current public personal attacks of county commissioners affect ability of Commissioners to get things done.
- Forced annexation.
- Current method of encouraging growth with incentives, needs to get away from “me too” way of attracting jobs and try a different approach than incentives.
- Provide opportunities to involve college age people in process.
- Redundancies between City/County Services.

Improve the Community

- Greater collaboration among universities, colleges and others (CCL) for development of human capital.
- Increase/strengthen small business incubation – stimulate business entrepreneurship.

Challenges (any jeopardy to future success)

- Rural atmosphere may be lost as city grows.
- Large, diverse group(s) speak another language – find a way to be inclusive.
- Increase in taxes, perception that citizens not getting money’s worth, not getting value, burdensome – be aware of impact and where money goes.

Parking Lot

- School system, use of money, return on investment in schools.

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- Needs to look at creative use of buildings (Sears) for jail.
- State law governing annexation.
- Strengthen business education in public school system in order to stimulate stronger business entrepreneurship.

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Southern High School
May 15, 2007

Strengths

- Our churches.
- Small community feeling.
- Community programs.
- Diversity – race, culture.
- Educational opportunities.
- Cost of living.
- Strong in volunteerism.
- Philanthropy.
- Roads and infrastructure.
- Emergency Response System.
- Overall, environmentally good shape.
 - Air quality.
- Good law enforcement.
- K-12 school system better than a lot.
- Number of colleges for advanced education.
- Education affordable.
- Affordable tax rate.

To Improve

- Overcrowded schools.
- Need more visionaries in leadership.
- Cities must take responsibility in relationship to the density of schools.
- The County should take charge of solid waste – then everyone would have to participate.
- We know growth follows, county manage growth by where they put sewage lines.
- We need a greater sense of Regionalism – it takes a lot of political cooperation to be regionally and globally competitive.
- Governments should merge into one county government rather than have 2 cities.
- There should be no more small towns incorporating – it is counterproductive.
- We need good grocery shopping in all neighborhoods.
- Government must be financial accountable.
- Economic development need to be strengthened.
- Need more medical facilities in outlying areas.
- Need more involvement between community and county government.

Opportunities

- Jobs, employment.
- More public awareness on opportunities.
- Airfares – lower.
- Protect open spaces and streams (national resources) – do more.
- Improve volunteerism connectiveness (central location)
- Apply idea of leadership – Greensboro to County (to foster community involvement) – get people engaged in process.
- What opportunity does Randleman Dam provide for Guilford County.
- Challenge young people to become involved .
- US First (Robotics Competition).
- Destination Imagination.
- Better understanding and/or education of Guilford County Government.
- Look at a more aggressive outreach program by the County to communicate and educate what it (County) can or cannot do.
- Internet is becoming more available.
- Lack of understanding as to what the responsibilities of City and County government are and School Board.
- An understanding of what all elected officials are responsible for.

Challenges

- Not having sufficient law enforcement is a challenge.
- Dealing with the large influx of people is a challenge. NC is growing fast – it impacts on schools, roads, and infrastructure.
- Extension of water and sewage is a challenge.
- Public interest must be fostered – notice the low attendance at this forum. There's too much complacency.
- Economic development is a challenge. We need to have the ability to transform ourselves from dependency on old industries – tobacco, textile, furniture. In order to sustain ourselves we need to move towards new industries.
- Hiring and retaining EMS, Fire, and Law enforcement is a challenge.
- Retention is a problem – it costs a great deal to rehire if someone only stays 6 months.
- EMS services are challenged – many employees face burn out, injury and low wages.
- We must educate elected officials on moving to a knowledge economy – on how to attract those companies.
- We should study other areas that attract new industries – Raleigh, Research Triangle, etc.
- Health care is a challenge – there are new diseases emerging that challenge us as the population grows.
- We lack of law enforcement.
- We need to balance the quality of our law enforcement and fire dept.
- We need the ability to finance all big items needed to sustain our quality we need the ability to pay for our future needs.
- We need to think globally – what can we manufacture here not overseas.

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- Our natural resources are a challenge.
- Energy is a challenge – it will impact lots of areas – we need to look for alternative ways to reduce our need.
- There’s a possibility of a pandemic.
- We’ve been fortunate in terms of natural disasters, but we need a system in place to deal with possible natural disasters.
- We have to have a vision and with it, some forethought – on a local level, we need a “think tank” (retirees, students, professionals) to tackle our challenges.
- We continue to need more and more of a vision of the future.
- There are lots of creative people in our community – we need a way to get from our vision to implementation of a plan.
- There’s a breakdown in communication between our municipalities – there is tension between officials and government bodies – each is protecting its own turf.
- We need K-12 programs on entrepreneurship. We need to foster the development of Entrepreneurial Engines.

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Bur-Mill Park
May 22, 2007

What Makes Our Community Stand Out?

- Great standard of living – 2 very good cities and smaller townships that are well organized.
- Good leadership.
- Good mix urban and rural.
- Great density of higher education (5+ in county), fine community college.
- Diversity of population - >85 languages spoken in schools – a value.
- Bur-Mill stands as a “gem”; thanks to the county for purchasing vs. developing.
- Appreciation of developing/preserving open space – parks.
- Social capital – very caring. County – volunteering, nonprofits, churches, giving to support others.
- Great Greensboro public library system.

What Are the Problems the County Faces?

- Transportation – roads are crowded with one person vehicles. Need to adopt car pooling, convenient mass transportation system, coordinate with other areas.
- Uncontrolled growth – more people don’t solve problems. Added population without an adequate tax base only increases the services needed. Need quality growth, well-thought out, planned. Attract higher paying jobs.
- Education – even if taxes increase, need to support county school budget, lower class sizes. We are currently short-changing education.
- Economic well-being – recruit higher-end industries. Get away from incentives.
- Education – It is a problem to have children in trailers, physical infrastructure/buildings inadequate.
- Advanced reading program is not as it is positioned– children are not tested. Volunteers have to test them. Lack of support.

Something That Can Be Done to Improve Our Community!

- Provide more mass transportation Enhance bus system but also consider rail/other options.
- Make education a priority and focus on funding to support good physical facilities, teachers and programs.
- Important to have a well-educated populace.
- Continue the “good” – parks, open space, leadership.
- Fund public library services outside of the city – county location and services (25% now served are from outside of the city.)

What Challenges to the County May Surface in the Future?

- Lack of cooperation between city/county library system.
- Failure of tax base to keep up with cost of services. Consider other options to raise revenue without driving people away.
- Deforestation of forests. No sense of appreciation for forests/trees. Require that esthetics have value. Establish buffer zones. Consider fines for development not preserving green spaces.
- Planning and development process that is not well-thought out and based on a future-focused plan.

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Andrews High School
May 22, 2007

What is Guilford County Doing Well?

- The weather here is good.
- The County makes people feel welcome – the recreation areas and parks are in great shape.
- The schools are receptive to hearing from the public and they understand the public's needs.
- We do a good job of social services, especially in last five years especially helping children and adoption.
- The EMS systems are good and number of fire stations and ambulances is adequate.
- It is convenient that County services (such as Register of Deeds) are available in High Point as well as in Greensboro.

What Can Guilford County Do Better?

- Change in sales tax from per capita to ad valorem – causes communities to compete with each other by raising tax rates to keep from losing revenue.
 - Consider modified distribution of sales tax.
- Planning in “ETJ” – sewer line extended to Western Guilford County – more efficient if it were an ETJ to High Point in SW Guilford County.
- Dollars spent should reflect county members proportionately (e.g., with minorities), particularly with hiring and letting contracts.
- Needs to do a better job of communication between Greensboro, High Point and the County to be more inclusive of High Point's voice – should consider in Strategic Planning Process.
- Education – people of color more often go to a 2-year college – would like to see more education of other options both in and out of state (more info and guidance about 4-year options).
- Affordable housing – built toward edges of county – not in Greensboro and High Point.
- Public transportation – in more of rural areas – not in cities: need longer operating hours.
- Support a trade magnet school.
- County could do a better job of running the Parks System – could relieve cities of trying to find funds to do this. It would be better placed with the county.
- Could deal with HIV/AIDS citizens in a better way. Hospitals need to treat these patients.
- Do a better job with race relations – needs to come from the top leadership.
- Work better within government.
- Given number of institutions of higher learning, there's a “brain drain.” We need more economic development to employ graduates.
- More mass transportation – too many cars with one person in them. Could impact pollution, conservation.

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- Development or redevelopment of buildings in cities – attract new businesses to occupy buildings.
- County too large – not enough public transportation and needs longer hours of service across county and between major cities or within cities (regional).
- Work force – thousands of people looking for jobs and thousands of jobs. But there are disconnects. People aren't prepared for jobs – agencies tasked with this aren't doing a good enough job of this.
- Need to do a better job of getting people to use public transportation. Has a negative “stigma.”
- Work closely with existing small businesses in county to assist them to grow. Economy negatively impacts small businesses (e.g., cost of insurance and cost of running business disproportionate to size).
- Education is vitally important to us. Workforce isn't prepared. Need county support for early education (0 to 3).
- Arts in education nurture learning and fun. We need to support arts in education to attract industry.
- Redistricting problems in High Point – Andrews has negative stigma. More kids going to other public and private schools. Please support Andrews financially.
- Build trust between leadership and citizens.
- More control on vicious dogs – maybe require insurance.
- Police force to be more visible and know population. Particularly have black police officers in black neighborhoods.
- Arts equally as important as athletics in schools. County needs to continue to support arts in education.
- Confusion around different policing entities and location. We have many different law enforcement bodies and we don't know who can and can't do what. Lack of understanding of roles, accountability and power of different agencies.
- High Point and Greensboro both have jails. Concern about where prisoners will be housed safely. Don't mix petty and serious criminals. Citizen process – better way to house individuals in jails based on crime.
- Provide better alternatives to housing (in jail) for non-violent criminals.
- “Clean up” county commissioners meetings.
- County considering large tax increase. Will create too much of a burden.
- Get offenders out of schools.
- PR aspect of improving arts in school.
- More programs to help troubled students in schools.
- Support and protection of students in arts in schools.
- Increase educational budget.
- More voter registration in more places throughout the year.
- More political candidate information widely available (not just internet).
- More community (political info.) forums for public – widely available.
- More activities for kids to keep them out of trouble.

What Opportunities Do We Have in Guilford County?

- We have the opportunity to provide more information on culture and history to school children so they can start being involved at an early age.
- We need to get rid of the duplication of services so we have the resources to support new ideas.
- There's the opportunity for elected officials to find out why they don't work well together.
- We have the opportunity to have meetings between elected officials and staff to make sure goals are on target.
- Citizens have the opportunity to participate in budget meetings and other government meetings.

Challenges/Threats

- Losing Furniture Market is a challenge. We are now doing what we should have been doing all along to keep the Market.
- Education is a challenge – how we grow depends on how competent and educated our citizens are.
- The airport – we don't get the best flights. How do we keep air travel viable and affordable?
- There's the risk of losing our college graduates and others workers to employment out of the area.
- We risk of losing children to gangs – we need to build a foundation of safety.