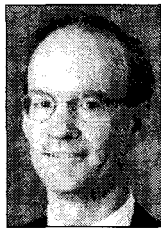


Greenway an important step forward

The News & Record's Aug. 18 editorial highlighted a few of the many positive outcomes that our community will enjoy when the Downtown Greenway is built in Greensboro. In addition to the advantages listed (getting people out and about, connecting neighbor-



TRIP BROWN



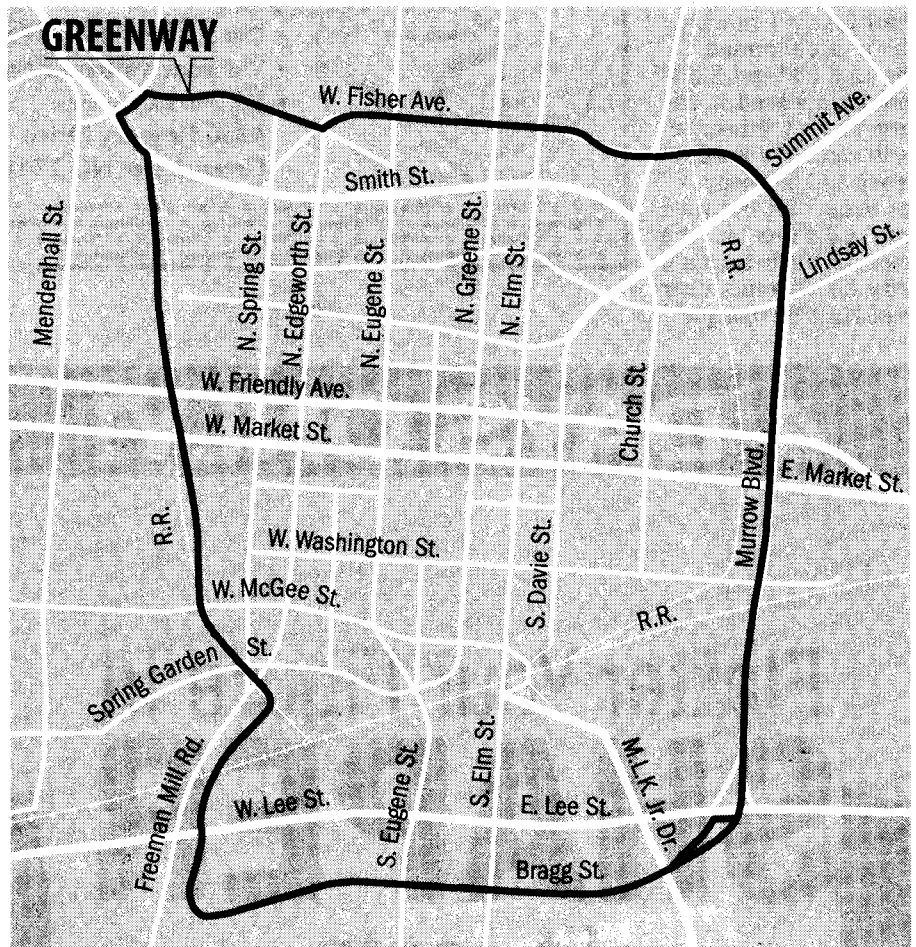
**JOHN
MCLENDON**

hoods and creating a sense of community), there are many more reasons why this Downtown Greenway should be a priority.

Greenways and trails are an important necessity for downtown area residents and young professionals. Attracting such a group has been identified as a requirement to rebuild our business vitality. Just as a thriving community needs a vibrant downtown, the Downtown Greenway will be the centerpiece of a first-class trails system, benefiting all segments of our community — south, east, north and west.

Another reason for building this linear park is to encourage exercise and thereby improve the health and wellness of our citizens. With two-thirds of our citizens overweight, and one-third obese, a strong trail system with this vibrant hub will help confront and beat this health crisis.

It is important to remember that the concept of this greenway came from several town hall meetings held in 2001. The Downtown Greenway was one of the ideas that arose, along with Center City Park and First Horizon Ballpark — all viewed as critical jump-starts to economic development and activity. When built, this project will join other redevelopment efforts, including the civil rights museum and the city's efforts on the Lee Street corridor, South Elm and the Ole



DOUG COX/News & Record

Asheboro neighborhood in positioning our community for success in the future.

The Downtown Greenway is a central component of the Bi-Ped Plan that the City Council adopted in October 2006 and was further endorsed late last year when the Bicentennial Commission, appointed by the City Council, chose it as its signature project. Such a greenway will join others being built across the country by forward thinking communities.

The Downtown Greenway will need imagination, commitment and money. Whether public, private or a combi-

nation of funds is used to build it, the economic and physical health of our community requires that it be built. Our Bicentennial will be a time of reflection and thanks for the vision, hard work and civic pride of our ancestors. More important, it can be used to show a similar vision, hard work and pride to our descendants. The Downtown Greenway will be a tangible demonstration of these traits for generations to come.

Trip Brown and John McLendon are co-chairmen of the Downtown Greenway Steering Committee.