



GROWING WITH GREER SINCE 2005

In 2005, while many law firms were moving to larger cities, Attorney Brian A. Martin witnessed the vision city leaders had for Downtown Greer. As a result he opened his law practice right in the middle of the historic downtown business district known as Greer Station.

Originating with the goal of becoming Greer's hometown law firm, Brian A. Martin Attorneys at Law has grown to include multiple attorneys focusing on:

Probate, Estate Planning and Elder Law – providing services including probate of estates, personal representative and trustee services, drafting of wills, powers of attorney, living wills and trusts.

Real Estate Law – representing landowners, developers, buyers, sellers and investors in all aspects of residential, commercial or industrial real estate situations including everything from consults to closings, contracts, bonds for title, escrow services, negotiation, title search and clearing of title issues, economic development projects, property tax appeals, and homeowner associations.

Business/Corporate Law – assisting with business formations, advising on business governance and structure options, drafting of business documents, by-laws, operating agreements, asset purchase agreements, stock transfers, corporate resolutions, employment matters, contracts, and much more.



Attorney Brian A. Martin

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Special Center Foldout

featuring

Six Artist Renderings

> Project Timeline

Downtown Merchants' Reactions

CenterG Magazine was produced by The Greer Citizen staff and the City of Greer Communications Office.

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BEGINNING WITH THE

COMMUNITY MASTER

PLAN CREATED IN

2015 WITH GUIDANCE

FROM RESIDENTS, CITY

LEADERS DEVELOPED

A PLAN TO BRING THE

IDEAS FOR DOWNTOWN

TO LIFE. CENTERG

IS THE FRUITION OF A

COMMUNITY'S DREAMS,

A CITY'S VISION AND A

DESIGNER'S TOUCH.

Can You Imagine?

o, I mean *really*. Can you imagine?
Picture, if you will, a scene where Greer's mayor and council members and interested citizens and others gathered one day for a matter of great significance. As they moved to the center of the street, a local photographer raised his flashbulb and, in an instant, the moment was memorialized forever.

Imagine.

The city was only 40 years old at that point. The occasion was when the city decided to remove the wooden sidewalks in downtown, to put concrete sidewalks in front of the stores, and to concrete Trade Street.

Think about the energy and the synergy that would have created in downtown Greer. It transformed downtown. It brought them into a new era. It legitimized them from a dirt main street to having a main street with sidewalks. It brought new life. It brought new businesses. And it brought a feel to Greer that, until that time, they had never had.

Think about what has taken place on those very sidewalks during the last 110 years. There have been people who got off a train right there at the station across the street who were coming to this area for quite possibly the first time to settle down. Maybe even from a foreign country.

There had been weddings and even funerals held at one time here on Trade Street. There have been festivals. There have been gatherings. There have been good days and there have been bad days. Downtown Greer has weathered them all.

Downtown has taken on a life of its own. Trade Street and those sidewalks can't be underestimated in terms of what they do for our community. They are the barometer of confidence that this community has in its downtown. It's an interesting dynamic and we don't think about it much. It's just an old sidewalk. It's that sidewalk that we don't notice until it's cracked. It's that street we don't notice until it has a pothole. But it is the heartbeat of our downtown.

The definition of synergy is two or more forces coming together to create more energy than they would separately. That's absolutely critical to this project.



Think about the energy. Think about the synergy that created.

Can you imagine?

No, I mean can you *really* imagine?

Can you imagine the energy and the synergy the CenterG Project is going to have on our downtown?

We've gotten more than 100 years of use out of Trade Street. She is a grand old dame. But it's time to retire her for something new. We do that with a bit of a heavy heart, but we also do it knowing that what we are going to do will transform Greer for the next hundred years.

The definition of synergy is two or more forces coming together to create more energy than they would separately. That's absolutely critical to this project. It speaks volumes to our council and those on our staff who captured this vision, who have embraced this vision, who are helping fund this vision and are moving this community forward.

So, as we move forward, we do so all together... with synergy.



Designing Downtown

sk residents what they love about the City of Greer and you'll likely receive a variety of responses. The city did ask residents what they wanted when preparing a streetscape design for the historic central business district and two recurring responses — walkability and public space — led to the shared street design that is a centerpiece of CenterG.

The CenterG Project has its roots in the Greer Community Master Plan, a document facilitated by Kimley-Horn of Charlotte, N.C. and unveiled in May of 2015. While preparing the plan, the City of Greer, the Partnership for Tomorrow and Kimley-Horn hosted numerous public workshops to collect input on how the city should look and grow over the next 15 years.

"A lot of this came out of the land



Community members shared input through workshops and surveys beginning in 2014.

It's more than a street. You are creating a park for downtown.

Kyle Baugh CenterG designer

use portion of the transportation plan," CenterG designer Kyle Baugh said. "We've been here for probably five years now working with the community. The plans that are most successful are not ones that I just design; they are the ones that we work with the community to design together.

"When we started to focus our efforts on the downtown project, we really started to understand the importance of revitalizing downtown and making it more walkable and creating an environment not just to better the lives of the people that live in the community, but those who visit the community as well."

The shared street approach is not new to international urban design, but it is rare in the southeastern United States. The approach eliminates the traditional segregation of motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists by removing curbs and using minimal signage. Colored brick pavers and changes in material delineate traffic patterns and reduce speeds.

The design also provides for the top requests of those who attended a public streetscape planning workshop in December of 2016.

"This design permits a very strategically planned gathering area - a plaza. But it's a plaza that still functions for commerce,"



Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. "It's a place that enables those two functions to be done in the exact same place with a different type of design."

"What we realize and what we envision for Greer, specifically, is that when you raise the street and create a festival street environment, you create a more walkable street," Baugh added. "The tripping hazard goes away, the curb ramps go away, and when you decide to have an event or a street event, you close the street off on both ends and it becomes open to everybody. Then it's more than a street. You are creating a park for downtown."

All attendees at the 2016 workshop agreed that the design needed to be flexible and able to respond to changing circumstances and needs. They also unanimously agreed that the design should "help elevate the notoriety of downtown in the Upstate" and that downtown businesses would benefit from an enhanced streetscape.

Ninety-five percent of the group agreed that walkability should be prioritized over traffic flow and that more pedestrian activity would create more economic opportunity.

"I think the City of Greer has done such a great job from the beginning to get folks excited about the project and making sure their input was heard. I think we got that public input early enough to really start to grow the excitement," Baugh said. "It's always exciting to see a project start to go under construction. This has truly been a labor of love over the past couple of years and for the folks on my team at Kimley-Horn including Laura Handleton, who worked with me on the project day to day, we are incredibly excited to see this plan get under way and are looking forward to the ribbon cutting celebration."

Building Downtown

ou might not know much about Sossamon Construction, but you've probably benefited from some of their work.

Having done projects in the Upstate for more than six decades, the CenterG general contractor has made a name for itself in several major cities around the region.

As a builder, you want to be a part of projects that are significant and projects that make a difference in people's lives.

Matt Sossamon CenterG contractor

"We are a third generation, family-owned construction company," Matt Sossamon said. "We've been in business for over 65 years working throughout the upstate of South Carolina and crossing over into North Carolina as well."

Based in Gaffney, Sossamon Construction submitted the winning bid for the City of Greer's ambitious streetscape project that will provide a fresh look and feel to historic Greer Station.

It's a project perfectly suited to Sossamon Construction, which has recently completed streetscape projects in Spartanburg, Fountain Inn, Greenwood and Abbeville.

"For the last 15-plus years, we've been pretty busy with the streetscape work," Sossamon said. "When this came along, it





fit our personnel. It fit the timing where we were completing some of our previous streetscape work. We certainly look forward to building new relationships with new municipalities. It's a good opportunity."

The contractor has already been in Greer for several months, working at the site of the new Benson Automobile Dealership at the old Allen Bennett Hospital site.

"We're getting more familiar with the area — getting to know the City of Greer,

the public works, utilities, and companies around the area. We're starting to feel more and more at home," Sossamon said. "We realize this is a large project that is going to go on for over 18 months. We want to build a relationship in this community. We know that comes with hard work and dedication."

By mid-summer of 2020, Greer's central business district will have a distinctive shared street, new landscaping and lighting. Like an artist who signs a master portrait, it's a project that will forever be tied to Sossamon Construction.

"It's awesome to be a part of such a big project. A lot of focus is going into it," he said. "As a builder, you want to be a part of projects that are significant and projects that make a difference in people's lives. The Greer streetscape project certainly fits into that category.

"We're 100 percent committed to making this project a success," he said.

Partnership with a Plan

CoTransCo, GLDTC Vital to Streetscape's Success

ollaboration has been key in bringing Greer's CenterG project to life. This is most evident in the city's partnership with CoTransCo and the Greenville Legislative Delegation Transportation Committee (GLDTC), which have provided both funding and management for the project.

"This partnership has been critical to the project," Greer Mayor Rick Danner said. "We wouldn't have been able to do it without their help and oversight. They're as excited about this project as we are."

Prior to Sossamon Construction breaking ground, the GLDTC allocated \$750,000 to the project while CoTransCo drew up a construction design and conducted surveys.

"We collected data and gave it to Kimley-Horn so they could come up with the best plan for the project," CoTransCo's Terry Bragg said. "In the end, we made sure our construction drawings matched their architectural drawings.

"I think the best thing about this project is that it brings all of the dated infrastruc-



CoTransCo partners Terry Bragg (center) and Jeff Hilderbran (right) examine documents submitted at the bid opening for the CenterG project. With public dollars invested in the project, CoTransCo is working to make certain all construction is completed up to or beyond the specified scope of work.

ture up to current standards," Bragg said.

The GLDTC approves funding to improve and/or resurface existing municipal,

state, and county maintained roadways in Greenville County.

Danner said the committee's help has

been vital in achieving Greer Council's desired result.

"You don't do a project like this without a tremendous amount of legwork on the front end," he said. "We've been in the planning phase on this for two years before we even broke dirt. When you're talking about a project of this scope, it involves a tremendous amount of work on our staff's behalf and my hat is off to those that made these partnerships possible."

Bragg said he is confident in the design for CenterG and said CoTransCo will remain committed to seeing the project through.

"We're very pleased with it," Bragg said.
"This is the third streetscape project
we've worked on and we're very excited
about this one. Any time you work in a
downtown location, you're going to have
some problems when you start taking the
pavement out, but we're working through
those issues and the project is moving
along nicely."

When you're talking about a project of this scope, it involves a tremendous amount of work on our staff's behalf and my hat is off to those that made these partnerships possible.

Mayor Rick Danner City of Greer



From its beginning in 1952 to the present, Greer Memorial Hospital has served our community with excellence in health care and neighborly compassion. We began as Allen Bennett Memorial Hospital (ABMH), named in honor of the hometown Navy surgeon killed in WWII. That facility, believed to be the first satellite hospital in the nation, was part of Greenville Hospital System.*

In 2008, the hospital moved to a new campus and became known as Greer Memorial. In the decade since, this innovative facility has offered 24-hour emergency care; advanced technology; along with OB/maternity, cancer, orthopaedics and other specialty services.

Greer Memorial blends the best of a community hospital with the advantages of the organization's academic medical expertise. It has received Magnet Recognition Program® status, Baby-Friendly designation and numerous safety awards.

"You can't measure a facility like Greer Memorial in dollars," the mayor of Greer once said. "You measure it in quality of life."

We are honored to contribute to our community's quality of life, and we celebrate with Greer as it reaches another milestone. We look forward to many more partnerships and to helping residents enjoy the best health possible.

*In 2013, Greenville Hospital System became Greenville Health System, which recently joined with Palmetto Health to become Prisma Health™. Learn more at PrismaHealth.org.



Original Allen Bennett facilit



Allen Bennett Memorial Hospital



Greer Memorial Hospita



PrismaHealth.org







Greer CPW Prepares the Way

Utility replaces century old infrastructure

ore than a year before Sossamon Construction broke ground on the CenterG project, Greer CPW crews were working to overhaul the city's infrastructure downtown.

Greer CPW began replacing old sewer and water lines in the summer of 2017, some of which were nearly 100 years old.

"We knew that for us to be able to do that type of work on our streets, our infrastructure needed to be prepared for that," Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. "Infrastructure is going to last you about 80 to 100 years underground, and ours was at that point. It was time for us to upgrade our water lines, sewer lines and gas lines so we could continue providing for our businesses for the next 100 years."

The utility company replaced or repaired many of the oldest water and sewer pipes on the CPW system in Historic Greer Station, with new iron pipe or CIPP lining (cured in placed lining).

The CIPP allowed Greer CPW to rehabilitate the pipes without digging up asphalt, completing the work overnight and avoiding business disruptions.

"We didn't have to dig up 1,600 feet of Highway 14 or anything like that," CPW Engineering and Planning Manager Mark Harvey said. "That makes it easier for everybody."

Greer CPW has completed work on East Poinsett, South Main, Victoria, School,



Randall Streets, and most recently, Trade Street.

"On Trade Street, construction crews are taking up all this concrete that has basically protected that cast iron pipe through the years," Harvey said. "With pipe that old, it increases the likelihood of problems later on. That's why we went ahead and replaced that line. As the coordinator makes their way up, we'll run the service over to the buildings. It takes some coordinating, but it has gone very well."

Harvey said Greer CPW has been excited to be involved in downtown Greer's ongoing transformation.

"It's great to be able to do this and work with the city to be able to take care of these things," Harvey said.

"It's something that was needed because of the age of the infrastructure, but it's certainly something that's going to be good for the city overall. We're just glad we were able to be a part of it and provide some help."

CPW's Prep Work

South Main Street

West Poinsett Street to the railroad bridge

West Poinsett Street South Main Street to Line Street

South Main Street to Line Street (Highway 101)

School Street

South Main Street to first railroad track

Trade Street

West Poinsett St. to second railroad track

Victoria Street

South Main to Poinsett Street

Randall Street

South Main to Poinsett Street





Team Keeps Community Aware of FutureGreer

rom planning to groundbreaking to completion, keeping the news media and public informed about the CenterG project is no small task. City officials didn't have to look far to find a way to strategically communicate that Greer Station will be open for business throughout the project.

"One of our significant accomplishments has been assembling a first-rate Communications and Public Relations Team to work with the news media. social media sites, individual websites, merchants and the general public to share the excitement of this project," Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. "Our goal is to share not only the cutting-edge transformation coming to Greer Station, but also the excitement of watching that transformation take place."

Driggers looked to the city and its partner organizations when assembling the team, capping it off with a local communications professional:

- · Rosylin Weston, owner of RAWeston Communications who led the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport public relations office for nearly 20 years.
- · Steve Owens, Communications Manager with the City of Greer.
- · Katie Howell, Director of Marketing and Research with the Greer Development Corporation.
- · Nikki Crabtree, Director of Membership Engagement with the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce.
- · Alison Rauch. Public Information Coordinator with Greer CPW.

Hooverney Castaño, an intern in the City Communications Office, and Sheila Bradley, an associate with RAWeston Communications, round out the team.

"Every member brings a tremendous amount of creativity, imagination and talent to this group. It's also important to have professionals who know this community," Owens said.

"Each member brings valuable skills to the table and we also vary in age and experience. Rosylin and I have worked in the Upstate for nearly our entire professional lives - that's more than 60 years of experience combined. We have a dedicated group of millennials who are plugged in. engaged in the community and understand what the CenterG project will mean to young professionals in Greer and surrounding communities. Hooverney looks at the project with the fresh eves of a high school senior. It's the perfect group for this project."

How will the team market CenterG? In addition to the website www.futuregreer. com, expect videos, social events on-site, advertisements, publications, news coverage through traditional and social media, giveaway items and even a live streaming video camera to follow the progress. The team is creating a buzz around the project that is difficult to ignore.

"Having worked in Greer both professionally and as a Greer Chamber of Commerce board member. I have grown to love and appreciate the unique charm and character of this community," Weston said. "So opening my business here was a no brainer and joining this team of professionals charged with telling the story of how CenterG will take the best Green has to offer and make it even better was a natural fit me. I am excited about all the wonderful stories we'll share as we watch Greer transform itself into an even better place to live, work and play."



The City of Greer and Greer CPW are partnering on an Infrastructure Improvement and Streetscape Project in Historic Greer Station. What's being done and how will it affect your visit to the central business district? This site is designed to answer those questions and more.



Take a look at the current worksite Sponsored this week by Countybank

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST Never miss an update about the CenterG Project taking place in Downtown Greer. Receive news via email before it is posted You'll also have a chance to win some swag



Transforming a City Block

Downtown spaces get renewed life, hotel development

owntown Greer's transformation will not be limited to Trade Street and surrounding roads.

In fact, between renovation projects and new construction, the block north of Trade Street is undergoing a major transformation on approximately 75% of the total area.

That process began when Tribe513 purchased the former Mutual Home Store across from the entrance to Greer City Park. The faith-based, independent medical group consisting of Parkside Pediatrics, Brio Internal Medicine, Vida Gynecology and the Breastfeeding Center of Greenville, repurposed the building to house Parkside Pediatrics and Tribe513 corporate headquarters.

Grace Church is expanding its presence in the city by renovating the former D&D Ford building to accommodate a worship area, ministry spaces for both children and students, and a large group area and a courtyard.

Major change is also coming to the opposite corner of the block, where Sycamore Greer is in the process of redeveloping 2.6 acres of land at the corner of North Main Street and Jason Street to install a Hampton Inn hotel. The City of Greer's incentives for the investment include constructing a 300-space parking garage adjacent to the new hotel and leasing it 100 spaces for guest use.

"We've been recruiting a hotel for about as long as we've been planning to do a streetscape project, but we know they were independent," Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. "Our good fortune is that once we attracted a developer to build a hotel in our downtown, one of the tipping points for their decision was the recognition that we were indeed proceeding with the streetscape project.

"They wanted to know when it would happen, what it would look like and what would happen in front of their property and how they could tie into what we would be



doing. So we were very fortunate that, although they were independent, they came together at the same time. One supports the other."

Sycamore Greer also plans to construct and lease retail spaces that will flank the Hampton Inn on Jason St. and to the intersection of Main St. and E. Poinsett St. The brick paver sidewalk design from the CenterG project will be extended to the hotel site.

Demolition began in February and the project is targeted for completion in mid-summer of 2020, paralleling completion of the CenterG project.

"This project has been several years in the making," Greer Mayor Rick Danner said. "It's something the council and our citizens took an interest in, and it took finding the right people to do it."

Danner said it was important for the city to schedule these projects for the same time to limit interruptions and obstacles for commuters.

"We had been hopeful since Sycamore announced they were going to move forward with the hotel that the projects could take place simultaneously," Danner said. "The parking garage and the hotel are at the outer-edge of where the streetscape work is taking place, but when these projects are done, we'll have changed the way downtown is going to look and feel for a long time. You just don't get that opportunity often."

The project is an indication, according to Driggers, that response to the downtown renovation in the form of investment will be strong.

"Just the investment on the hotel site is already showing the private sector investment as a match to our public sector investment. We're already at break even," Driggers said.

WE ARE THE fuctore



Downtown Greer opening 2020

HAMPTON.COM

Access 'Granted'

he City of Greer partnered with the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority to offer Trade Street merchants a unique opportunity to improve the look and access to their businesses during CenterG construction.

The city contributed \$150,000 to the Façade Improvement Program, which allowed qualifying merchants to apply for a \$10,000 or \$20,000 grant.

With no required matching funds, a Trade Street merchant could apply for the \$10,000 grant, which was funded by \$5,000 from the City of Greer and \$5,000 from GCRA, to renovate their front and/or rear facades. If a merchant invested \$5,000, the City of Greer also matched that investment, resulting in a \$20,000 grant.

Among the downtown businesses that applied for or expressed an interest in the grant program were Colón Law Firm, Empire LTD, Pour Sports Pub & Grille, Stoner Engineering, Langley and Associates Architects, Carolina Treasures, Stomp-

ing Grounds, Chelsea's, In-Site/On-Site Co-working, Carolina Style Hair Salon and SELECT Restaurant.

James Carter, owner of Empire Limited, was the first beneficiary of the Façade Improvement Program. He used grant funds to add signage to the front of his store, as well as an outdoor sitting area and an awning to his rear entrance to attract customers. He said the Façade Improvement Program is a clear sign to merchants and customers that Greer station would be open for business during construction.

"I've been through maybe four different revitalizations projects, so I kind of had a heads up on what to expect," Carter said. "During the process of work being done at my front door, I wanted customers to have access through my back door."

The program was just one strategy the city implemented in an effort to limit inconvenience to merchants and customers during construction. In conjunction with the façade grants, the city completely resurfaced in 2018 three alleys that provide



James Carter, owner of Empire Limited, utilized Facade Grant funds to add an outdoor sitting area and awning to his rear entrance.

rear access to businesses.

It also contracted to resurface and add lighting to three parking lots that provide access to those alleys, including lots in front of and behind the Depot.

"Asphalt and curb were removed, the sites were excavated and curb, gutters, sidewalks, pedestrian ramps and storm drains installed prior to asphalt milling and surfacing. Striping and installing lights were the final step," project manager Phil Rhoads said. "It was an ambitious construction schedule that adheres to the City of Greer's commitment to minimize impact to downtown businesses in every way possible."

Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said it has all been a part of the plan to keep Greer Station open throughout the CenterG project.

"Getting customers to businesses is going to be critically important during construction. We entered the project realizing it was a priority and we've made resource commitments toward it," Driggers said.



Workers resurfaced the alleyway behind 200 block Trade Street businesses in preparation for CenterG.



New asphalt and striping in the public lot off of School Street helped provide easy access to back entrances.

REFLECTING ON CENTERG

I am so proud to be a part of Greer and I am looking forward to our future here. While each of us business owners will have to adapt to the upcoming changes, we could not have picked a better time to be a part of this growing town.

ANDREW CARTERBarista Alley

Having grown up in downtown Greer, I've seen many changes over the years but none as significant as this one to the community. It is exciting to know that generations to come will benefit from the improvements we are making now.

Countybank

JULIA WILLIAMS SIMMONS Countybank

We at SELECT are excited to be a part of the growth Greer is experiencing. The streetscape is just the frame that will enhance the beauty of this great city. We look forward to watching the progress every day.

ANDREA GONZALES
SELECT

In addition to beautifying the city, I believe the project will also bring awareness to all that Greer has to offer and encourage the community to visit more frequently, stroll the streets, shop the boutiques, and fall in love with the charm of our historic town!

ANNA STOUFFERUrban Petals, LLC



BUILDING FOR GREER'S FUTURE



HANCING TRANSFORMING RENOVATING REVITALIZING



CPW begins providing natural gas



1999

First Greer Community **Master Plan launches** and includes improvements to central business

December 2016

Community meeting for resident and merchant input on downtown streetscape plan

May 25, 2017

CPW begins work on downtown underground



2018

February 7,

GCRA reveal Facade Improvement **Grant Program** to merchants





July 12,

Merchants are using Façade **Grants. Two** have already received them and eight more are under consideration



October 15, 2018

Mandatory pre-bid meeting

November 8, 2018

Bid opening. Sossamon Dillard Excavating Construction of Gaffney of Pelzer bids submits the lone bid: \$10,968,315 \$11,757,837.95

December 14,

SOSS

CenterG contract

SOSSAMON

CONSTRUCTION

December 30, 2018

Sossamon Construction awarded

Bid opening:

\$10,868,886 while

Sossamon

brand Construction bids

2019

Groundbreaking ceremony and reveal of Center(



providing Greer with electric. wastewater, and water services



CPW begins



Community

pledges \$2

million to

support a

1997

The Partnership

for Tomorrow is

being created

master plan.

Master Plan launches. Kimley-Horn facilitates planning process for the Partnership for



May 28, 2015

Second Greer Community Tomorrow and City of Greer



October 10,

2017 City Council unanimously approves Project Kaboom: a private downtown hotel and municipal

commit

million for hotel parking garage

BY KAELYN CASHMAN STAFF WRITER

A new Hilton brand hotel is on its way to the corner of Poinsett Street and Main Street in downtown Greer, city officials announced last week.

The City of Greer will invest \$1.8 million for in project, which is set to be

April 24, 2018

Paving of alleys and parking announced



August 16, 2018

City Council approves \$57,403 for the purchase of three electric vehicles to shuttle customers during construction

First completed project released to the public

September 26, 2018

Greer Station Streetscape Project advertised for bid

October 2,

November 19,

pre-bid meeting

Mandatory

2018 Streetscape project

rebid announced

January 29, 2019

for hotel begins





2020

Fencing and demolition

2020 Projected completion date for CenterG Project

June 30,

REFLECTING ON CENTERG



Greer is already a very unique, small and quaint town. With this new renovation, we all feel that it will definitely become a destination for all surrounding areas as well as visitors to the Upstate.

BRIAN LEHMAN

The Galleries of Brian Brigham

It is time for a fresh look on Trade Street. I am glad to see the work underway and believe the streetscape when completed will draw more people to our downtown. I also believe the streetscape will enhance our festivals with a new look.

KEITH SMITH

Keith Smith Builders, LLC



I think the city of
Greer is making the
correct decisions
investing in not only
the infrastructure of
downtown Greer but
also in the future of the
merchants that have
themselves willed this
downtown into a very
special place to visit!

JAMES CARTER Empire Ltd. Studio



Priceless Pictures

Downtown Visitors Get Sneak Peek with VR

s the old saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.
Renderings and construction plans have played an important role in helping the general public realize what the CenterG project has in store for Downtown Greer. But what if those interested in the project could immerse themselves in those renderings to feel as if they are a part of the completed design?

Welcome to the 21st Century, where the picture is priceless.

The City of Greer has contracted with the architectural, engineering and planning firm Clark Patterson Lee (CPL) to provide a modern look at the work planned in the CenterG project through virtual reality.

"This is fairly new technology that has advanced to the point that it has practical applications for a project like ours," Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. "We think it is most effective as a communications tool, allowing a viewer to put on

Greer City Council members Judy Albert (left) and Lee Dumas (right) experience the CenterG streetscape in virtual reality while Mayor Rick Danner looks on.

a headset and look around at what our downtown will look like when the project is completed."

It also provides for a version that will be accessible at www.futuregreer.com for desktop computers and mobile devices.

Virtual reality became widely used by design and engineering firms in 2016 when affordable headsets with advanced features hit the market and new software made it affordable and simple enough for architects and engineers to convert building information modeling data into a virtual reality experience.

CPL utilized the latest scanning technologies and worked with CenterG designer Kimley-Horn to provide reality capture and immersive design for 10 vantage points throughout Greer Station. Each vantage point was populated with features identified in the design documents to generate future conditions.

The technology was rolled out to Greer City Council at its annual planning retreat in March and will soon be unveiled to the public.

"Immersive is the correct word. There is a 'wow factor' when you put on a headset and see what our downtown will be. Pictures and renderings just don't do it justice," Driggers said. "Beyond that, scenes can be viewed on a smartphone or tablet so businesses will be able to invite their customers to take a look at the future while they are shopping or dining."

The latter is important as consumers appear to be embracing the technology for both entertainment and news as more content is created for those platforms. The rise of augmented reality, placing virtual content into the real world through the use of a device such as a smartphone, paralleled the global hit game Pokémon Go released in mid-2016.

Social media sites like Facebook and YouTube bought into the new technology and began adding content for consumers. Utilization of VR technology has grown exponentially in industries such as tourism and real estate in addition to architecture and design.

By 2020, the number of VR headsets sold is predicted to reach 82 million – a 1,507% increase from 2017 totals – indicating a strong future for the technology.

Want to take a look? Visit www.future-greer.com to view the scenes on your desktop or mobile device. The City of Greer has also invested in Oculus Go VR headsets that will be available to Greer Station Shuttle riders to view the CenterG project's end results.

Shuttles on the Move Downtown

Need a lift to Downtown Greer while the CenterG Project is underway?

The Greer Station shuttles have you covered.



Patrons are hopping on the shuttles in surprising numbers since the free service began on January 15. Driven by ambassadors who have completed extensive training on the street-legal electric vehicles, the shuttles make regular stops at five parking location on the periphery of the central business district. Riders may debark and grab a return ride from two central locations.

Sidewalk signs indicate the locations where riders may park to use the shuttles or hop back on downtown.



Shuttles currently operate from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. and from 6-9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Rides are available on Sundays from 10:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Please note that parking lots at First Baptist Church and Memorial United Methodist Church will not be utilized on Sundays.

The shuttles are clearly marked and have a safety light on the top. They also feature roll-down covers to protect riders in the event of inclement weather.

Shuttle Stop Locations

Poinsett Street/
Miller Street Public Lot

(Beside Greer Fire Department)

West Poinsett Street
(Beside Greer First Baptist Church)

Depot Street Public Lot (Behind The Greer Citizen)

North Main Street/ West Church Street (McLeskey-Todd Lot)

North Line Street (Greer City Hall Lot)

Trade Street (200 Block)

When Planning Pays Off

Central Business District Reaping Rewards of Investments

ny good leader will look to and learn from the past to help determine a future course. In the case of renovating the central business district and estimating a return on that investment, city leaders only needed to look back a decade.

In 2007-08, the City of Greer constructed its new municipal facilities — city hall, city park, and police and courts complex — in the Greer Station footprint expecting a solid return through private investment. They were not disappointed.

"We invested about \$21 million in those projects and we're now in year ten. We know of that \$21 million investment we've had an increase in assessment in our downtown area of nearly \$100 million. That's what we believe this streetscape project will do for us as well," City Administrator Ed Driggers said.

"It will continue to encourage owners to invest in their properties. We believe it will allow us to look at a larger area outside of what is now our core business

> district where we know there is interest in residential development and new commercial development. We're confident that those things will

occur. So our public investment of infrastructure downtown will incubate investment by the private sector and our belief is that we'll see it at a ratio equal to or greater than what we saw with our initial investments 10 years ago."

The City of Greer is investing approximately \$25 million on all projects, including the Highway 29 and North Main Street LED lighting project, a new municipal parking garage and Hampton Inn hotel, the Center for the Arts renovation and park designed to anchor the Arts



Greer City Park (above) and City Hall (right) represent the investments that leaders made to downtown.

District identified in the Greer Community Master Plan, and the CenterG streetscape project..

The money for the projects has been raised in two ways: annual surplus in the fund balance and bonds. The city, which has long recognized the need for these projects, has for years set aside money from its fund balance (the equivalent of a savings account) during profitable years.

To finish funding the projects, the city also bonded \$12 million, largely to assist with funding for the parking garage, hotel project and Center for the Arts.

The best news for taxpayer and businesses?

"There will be no tax increase or business license fee increase to pay for this project," Driggers said. "Our elected officials were very adamant and vocal during the planning process. They said we are a rapidly growing community. Investments are being made in our community and our tax base is growing. Growth is necessary to fund the improvements we are making with this type of a project."

A return on the CenterG investment is already being seen.

For years, city officials had been trying to recruit

an investor to construct a hotel in Greer Station. With CenterG plans in place, the Sycamore Greer Investment Group headed by CEO Yatish Patel, decided to build its new Hampton Inn hotel just a block from Trade St. and Greer City Park. That is expected to bring more visitors to Greer to eat and shop during their stay.

"Part of our strategy is that we believe we have a huge responsibility in getting diners, shoppers and patrons to a business's door. That's what we can do. We've got to create an environment that creates that commerce," Driggers said. "It is then the business's responsibility to cash in. How they market, how they price, what their merchandise is... those are business decisions for them. Our role in a public-private partnership is to do everything we can to make folks want to come to those businesses. We have great hope and belief that's what this will do – create more exposure for our central business district and more visitors to our central business district. So it's a win-win. Our tax base increases and businesses' sales increase."

As if to confirm that philosophy, Downtown Greer welcomed the grand openings of three new restaurants during a one-week span in January as construction was just getting underway.

L'Incanto, Ira's Chicken and SELECT have enjoyed steady traffic despite the work taking place outside their doors. With continued marketing and customers being able to jump on one of the Greer Station Shuttles to reach their doorsteps, the business know the best it yet to come.

"We get to see kind of a transformation. It's already a beautiful little town so this is the frame that is going to make everything better," SELECT's catering manager Andrea Gonzales said.

Ira's Chicken owner Warren Peden said opening before the construction began was an opportunity to get in on the ground floor.

"This place is going to go somewhere," Peden said. "We feel like Greer is a great place to do business."

Our public investment of infrastructure downtown will incubate investment by the private sector and our belief is that we'll see it at a ratio equal to or greater than what we saw with our initial investments 10 years ago.







CRAIG
architecture
GAULDEN
planning
DAVIS

Craig Gauldin Davis in association with Langley & Associates Architects, LLC







BY JOADA HIATT

ain Street is the location of most business districts in towns across the U.S., but Greer is unique. Trade Street began as the center of commerce and remains the historical center of downtown Greer.

The name is fitting. Merchants like H. P. Moore and David D. Davenport traded staples like coffee, sugar and dry goods for bales of cotton grown by local farmers. The active trading of cotton built Greer.

The little village of Greer's Depot began in 1873 as a two-room station, house, barn and outbuildings belonging to James Manning Greer. William Shumate bought Greer's land and sub-divided it into lots. When Greer incorporated in 1876, it was a half mile radius from the depot.

The first merchant on record was H. C. Mark, a Greenville businessman, who opened a mercantile (general) store. Other merchants followed: Hughes & Bomar, Wood & Wood, W. A. Hill and J. M. Littlefield. By 1890 Davenport was doing \$100,000 in business.

By 1896 there were 15 businesses operating out of wooden buildings along Trade.

By 1898 there were 39 merchants, 14 of which were general stores. The first downtown bank opened the next year as the Bank of Greer.

By 1915 the downtown streetscape had poles for electricity and telephones. The new CPW provided water,



lights and sewer. Brick buildings replaced the wooden ones. There were three banks, a hotel, tailors, restaurants, meat market, grocery, clothing and shoes, barbers, lawyers, hardware, auto and motorcycle dealers, doctors, and dentists. Everything that a family needed was on Trade or Randall. *The Greer Observer* newspaper on Randall St. advertised Trade Street bargains.

Charlie Drace opened two movie theaters: one on Trade and one on Hill (E. Poinsett). As town photographer he preserved Greer's history in photographs and left us a clear picture of Trade Street in the early days.

Most of downtown Greer was built by the 1930s with occasional new buildings added in the next couple of decades. After World War II, downtown Greer boomed and was vibrant through the 1960s. The 1971 building of Grant Plaza (now Greer Plaza) on West Wade Hampton Boulevard was a portent of the direction of business. Indoor malls in Greenville lured shoppers away.

In the 1980s Greer undertook a Main Street Program to revitalize downtown. Another significant date in the redevelopment of downtown Greer was the designation of the downtown as a historic district in 1997 by the National Park Service. Keeping the 1920s ambiance on Trade paid off when movie producers for the movie Leatherheads chose Greer as a filming site.

Bernard Price owner of Smith & James, the second oldest downtown continuing business, never lost faith that Trade Street would again be busy and vital as it once was. The streets are lined with cars again; restaurants and shops are busy. Past, present and future meet along the street called Trade.

Investment Paying Dividends

owntown Greer is becoming the destination location Lisa Garland envisioned when she opened her Trade Street business in 2012.

"Greer is at the center of everything,"
The Stomping Grounds owner said. "I
knew I couldn't be the only one that saw it
as a very desirable place. I felt like it was
moving in the right direction, and it really
has.

"I wanted this town to become known as a destination. I want people to come to Greer just for the sake of coming to Greer. That's what you're starting to see," she said.

My expectations and hopes of what this town has become have been far exceeded.

Lisa Garland Stomping Grounds

As the CenterG project overhauls the landscape outside of her business in the coming months, Garland is excited about the potential that lies ahead.

"It really is very exciting," Garland said.
"My expectations and hopes of what this town has become have been far exceeded. It seems like everyday we're seeing more investment in the downtown community."

In addition to the improvements being made on the street, Garland is making some improvements to her own storefront. Stomping Grounds will soon feature new doors, signage and an awning, thanks to funds from a facade grant.

"We were very blessed to have that approved," Garland said. "I wouldn't have had the funds to make those changes myself had it not been for what Greenville



County and the city have offered."

With construction on the CenterG project now underway, Garland said customers are continuing to find her coffee shop.

"There have been a couple of days during the construction that we've had record sales," Garland said. "Hopefully, the curiosity surrounding this project will pull people down here. Right now, it doesn't seem to be scaring anybody."

That customer base has grown over the last seven years.

"When I first started, I probably knew about 90 percent of our customers by first name, and every year that number gets reduced," Garland said. "Downtown Greer is now on the map now and it's drawing people in. Seeing all the new faces, along with our regulars, has been a great thing."

Although the business is getting bigger,

the mission behind Stomping Grounds has remained the same.

"We want people to be able to come and feel comfortable here—like it's your second home. That was the original concept of our name. We want you to feel like these are your stomping grounds," Garland said.

"We want to bring people together. That's what we're here for," she said.

Forward-Looking Vision Impresses Price

hrough a century of change, downtown Greer has maintained its historic roots while adapting with the times.

No one knows this better than Brandon Price, who has grown up working with Smith & James. The men's department store has been in business for 103 years.

For a small town, Greer has a forwardlooking vision that a lot of other small towns lack.

Brandon Price Smith & James

"Greer has changed a lot," Price said.
"I've grown up in this business, and I've seen how it has changed. We've been down here a long time. We were down here when there were seven men's stores downtown. We were here when everybody was here, we were here when nobody was here and we've been here as other businesses have started to come back."

Smith & James has maintained its prominence with local residents for decades, and Price credits the business's willingness to evolve.

"We've done so well because of our ability to change and adapt," he said. "We're known for suits and sport coats, but we understand that now, everybody doesn't wear suits and sport coats every day. Because of that, we've gotten heavily involved in casual wear and that sort of thing. We've tried to adapt as trends and fashion changes, and I think people appreciate that. We try to stay on the cutting edge of what's happening in the market."

Located at 222 Trade Street, the com-



pany will have a front-row seat to the CenterG project and all the future benefits it will bring to local merchants.

"For a small town, Greer has a forward-looking vision that a lot of other small towns lack," Price said. "You don't see a lot of cities willing to invest this type of money into their most historic places.

"We've lived through a bunch of streetscapes, but this one is exciting and we're hoping to benefit from it," he said. "When it's all done and put to bed, this is going to be a destination of a downtown. This is going to make our downtown different than a lot of other places you see. It will take some time, but we understand this is a big process and it's going to pay off."

In the meantime, Price and other downtown merchants are helping regular customers get to their front door.

"We're beefing up our social media presence to let people know that we're still here," he said. "I've told people that if they want to come in here and shop and they can't find a parking spot, park in the middle of the street and I'll go valet your car. Whatever we've got to do to get people in the door—we'll do. It may be difficult to get in here over the next year and a half, but we're asking customers to continue supporting us and all the other downtown merchants.

"We've been supporting this community for 103 years. I'm not looking at this streetscape as a hinderance on business. Hopefully, it's going to make business better." he said.

Smith & James is open from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

Index of Greer Station Businesses

FOOD AND DRINK

ABBOTT'S FROZEN CUSTARD

119 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-4422

BARISTA ALLEY

125 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-5180

BLUE RIDGE BREWING CO.

308 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 232-4677

CAMEROON LOUNGE

207 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-7722

CHOCOLATE DREAM SHOP

211 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 546-8640

CHON THAI RESTAURANT

219 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 655-7779

THE GREAT BAY OYSTER HOUSE

109 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-1030

IRA'S CHICKEN

107 S Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 655-5046

LA BOUTEILLE WINE & BEER BOUTIQUE

300 Randall Street, Suite B Greer, SC 29651 (864) 469-7669



L'INCANTO

117 E Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 479-9333

LOS PORTALES

109 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 662-5080

THE MASON JAR

202 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-4454

MAZZITELLI DELI

224 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 479-0685

POUR SPORTS PUB

302 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-5075

SELECT

112 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 551-2264

STILL WATER GRILL AND CATERING

304 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 479-0333

STOMPING GROUNDS COFFEE HOUSE AND WINE BAR

208 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 801-1555

THE STRIP CLUB 104

104 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-9104

WILD ACE PIZZA AND PUB

103 Depot Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-6900

SPECIALTY RETAIL

BENCHMARK BICYCLE SUPPLY Co.

207 Randall Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-4646

CHELSEA'S LADIES CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

224 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-7104

CAROLINA BARREL & BLADE

212 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-7651

CAROLINA TREASURES ANTIQUES & VINTAGE GOODS

214 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 590-2543

EMPIRE LTD HABERDASHERY & TUXEDOS

205 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-0068

THE GALLERIES OF BRIAN BRIGHAM

201 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 235-4825

THE GREER CITIZEN

317 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-2076

MAIALE BOUTIQUE

111 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-0990

THE SHOPPES ON TRADE

211 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 469-9885

SMITH & JAMES

222 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-6525

SOME PRIX PIERCING

300 Randall St., Suite C Greer, SC 29651 (864) 479-0404

SOUTHERN SISTERS BOUTIQUE

115 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 469-3719

TALLONI A SHOE SALON

113 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 801-1880

URBAN PETALS LIFESTYLE BOUTIQUE

210 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 569-6112

THE VAPE STATION

300 Randall Street, Suite G Greer, SC 29651 (864) 479-9400

COMMUNITY

CITY OF GREER

301 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 848-2150

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

100 School Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-3612

GRACE CHURCH - GREER

108 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 284-0122

GREATER GREER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

111 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-3131

GREER CPW

301 McCall Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 848-5500

GREER DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

111 S. Main Street, Suite B Greer, SC 29650 (864) 416-0125

GREER HERITAGE MUSEUM

106 S. Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 877-3377

GREER MUNICIPAL COURT

100 S. Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 848-5374

GREER POLICE DEPARTMENT

102 S. Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 848-2151

GREER RELIEF AND RESOURCES

202 Victoria Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 848-5355

NEHEMIAH COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

111 S. Main Street, Suite C Greer, SC 29650 (864) 655-5855

SERVICES

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101 N. Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 968-1030

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209 Depot Street, Suite C Greer, SC 29651 (864) 660-3455

BRIAN A. MARTIN, LLC, ATTORNEYS

212 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-7779

THE BRASS BEARD BARBERSHOP

101 Victoria Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 479-0357

BULLOCKS BARBER SHOP

225 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-9377

CAROLINA STYLE HAIR SALON

200 E. Poinsett St. Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-2360

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CBL STATE SAVINGS BANK

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COLON LAW FIRM

115 S. Main St. Greer, SC 29650 (864) 697-2870

COOPER'S GAS KING

214 E. Poinsett St. Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-5182

COUNTYBANK

300 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 331-2192

DANCEVISIONS

115 School St. Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-7458

DEERE EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION

104 Trade Street, Suite G Greer, SC 29651 (309) 743-1114

ENCORE MEDICAL STAFFING

218 Trade Street, Suite A Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-5900

ENDEAVOR INSURANCE SERVICES INC.

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FAIRWAY MORTGAGE

104 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 449-5845

GLOBAL MANAGEMENT PARTNERS

104 Trade Street, Suite J Greer, SC 29651 (864) 334-2860

THE HIRING GROUP

104 Trade Street, Suite B Greer, SC 29651 (770) 545-6262

IMAGE EAST VIDEO

110 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 469-6404

INSIGHT ONSITE COWORK

217 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 979-0951

THE INSURANCE SOURCE

114 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 467-8731

INTEGRA DOORS

209 Depot Street, Suite A Greer, SC 29651 (800) 613-2198

JOHN M. ROLLINS JR., ATTORNEY

219 Randall Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-0134

KEITH SMITH BUILDERS LLC

316 Trade Street, Suite C Greer, SC 29651 (864) 801-8701

LANGFORD ELECTRIC INC.

314A Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 879-8795

LANGLEY & ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS

109 S. Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (864) 968-0224

THE LAW OFFICE OF ANDREW R. HAVRAN

218 Trade Street, Suite C Greer, SC 29651 (864) 979-4602

MIMS LAW FIRM

100 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-0463

NAMASTE FITNESS STUDIO

122 Cannon Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 551-0058

PAYROLL MEDICS

218-A Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 640-8981

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145 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 272-0388

RE/MAX Moves

116 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 520-1001

SALUTEM ORGANIC MASSAGE

300 Randall Street, Suite F Greer, SC 29651 (864) 630-6141

SHEAR FAITH STYLE STUDIO

206 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 801-1733

SOSSAMON CONSTRUCTION

300 Randall Street, Suite D Greer, SC 29651 (864) 489-6148

STATE INTERIORS CUSTOM CABINETRY & DESIGN

200 Trade St. Greer, SC 29651 (864) 655-7486

STONER ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS

113 S. Main Street Greer, SC 29650 (248) 770-3484

STUDIO EAST

316 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 989-0011

TRIBE 513

145 E. Poinsett Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 272-0388

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204 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-0024

UTILITY SALES, INC.

223 Randall Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 877-5101

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111 S. Main Street, Suite A Greer, SC 29650 (864) 469-7261

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230 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 848-7212

GRACE HALL

108 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651 (864) 848-7212

GREER EVENT RENTALS

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