



Davidson Comprehensive Plan



UPDATE TO THE DAVIDSON GENERAL PLAN

The Town of
Davidson
NORTH CAROLINA

ADOPTED BY THE TOWN OF DAVIDSON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AUGUST 10, 2010

Preface by Margo Williams

The Davidson Comprehensive Plan is the result of thousands of hours of work done by hundreds of people who have a passion for life in Davidson. From citizens to staff to elected officials, all those involved gave it their time and energy because they want the town to endure and flourish with a plan that anticipates, and then shapes, the future based on who we are today and who we wish to be.

When the Board of Commissioners voted in spring 2008 to approve the process for creating a comprehensive plan, we could not predict the result. In fact, that group, comprising Mayor John Woods, and Commissioners Jenest, Johnson, Venzon, Webster, and Williams, knew that the result would be different and better than anything we could have imagined because of the intelligence, wit, and determination of the participants. The current Board of Commissioners is honored to have taken up our predecessors' call by approving the Comprehensive Plan.

This is a living document in that citizens will modify, change and fill in spaces over the coming years. It exists for more than governmental purposes. If we are successful, it will be a touchstone for all those who call Davidson home, as they look ahead and chart the town's course.

As people adapt the Comprehensive Plan to their own experiences, it will give future generations a way to hold tight to those ideals that have guided us into the 21st century and a way for Davidson to remain relevant in their own lives.

We hope that the Comprehensive Plan will be used as a reference by community organizations, including civic, faith-based, non-profit, school, neighborhood group, and business. We hope that it will help our town focus on becoming sustainable, on conserving limited resources, and on providing physical, economic and societal connections so that we may be healthy in every sense of the word. We hope our town will remain always open to new ideas.

To those in some future time, if you are reading this, we want you to know that we planted trees under whose shade we will never sit. We planted them for you.

Mayor John Woods
and
Commissioners:
Tim Dreffer
Brian Jenest
Laurie Venzon
Connie Wessner
Margo Williams

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Revised Draft January 13, 2010

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Davidson is a town that has long been committed to controlling its own destiny as a distinct, sustainable, and sovereign municipality. Our town's sense of community is rooted in citizens who respect each other; in racial and socioeconomic diversity; in pedestrian orientation; and in the presence of a liberal arts college. We believe our history and setting guide our future.

Mission

Davidson's government exists to help citizens in maintaining the town's unique qualities and to provide superior services to every resident. To this end, the town government of Davidson will operate according to the following core values:

Core Values

Citizens are the heart of Davidson, so town government will treat all people fairly, with courtesy and respect.

Open communication is essential to an engaged citizenry, so town government will seek and provide accurate, timely information and promote public discussion of important issues.

Davidson must be a safe place to live, work, and raise a family, so the Town will work in partnership with the community to prevent crime and protect lives, property, and the public realm.

Davidson's historic mix of people in all income levels is fundamental to our community, so town government will encourage opportunities and services that allow people of all means to live and work here.

Davidson's traditional character is that of a small town, so land planning will reflect its historic patterns of village-centered growth, with connection of neighborhoods, reservation of rural area, and provision of public spaces.

Citizens entrust town government with the stewardship of public funds, so government will wisely use our resources.

Successful government must be innovative, so Town leaders will be intellectually curious and open to new ideas.

Davidson's economic health is essential to its remaining a sustainable community, so town government will judiciously encourage and guide the location of new business opportunities.

Citizens need to move easily throughout the Town and region, so government will provide a variety of options, such as sidewalks, bike paths, greenways, connected streets, and transit.

Citizens must live in a healthy environment, so town government will protect watersheds, trees, air quality, and other elements of the town's ecology.

Acknowledgements

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of the hard work and dedication of over 180 residents, staff, regional stakeholders, and local leaders. This plan was written and will succeed based on conviction and passion.

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Davidson Elementary
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Thanks to Laura Schumacher for designing the The Comprehensive Plan logo.

Chapter 1



INTRODUCTION



“Citizens are the heart of Davidson, so town government will treat all people fairly, with courtesy and respect.”

-Town of Davidson Core Value

Chapter 1



INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive plan describes a vision for the long-term future of a town considering regional context and current growth trends. The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to guide decision-makers on a wide range of issues, in particular for land use policy, conditional development review, long-term planning initiatives, and capital investment decisions. Sometimes comprehensive plans are referred to as “general plans”, “long range plans”, or “community master plans.” Each requires substantial citizen input and oftentimes assistance from professional consultants.

Comprehensive plans usually precede and inform zoning and development ordinances, capital improvement plans, and staffing decisions. North Carolina law relates the following development decisions to comprehensive plans:

- School sites reservation
- Conditional and site specific development approvals
- Zoning regulations
- Local housing decisions
- Historic preservation planning

North Carolina law defines comprehensive plans as “land use plans, small area plans, neighborhood plans, transportation plans, capital improvement plans, official maps, and any other plans regarding land use and development that have been officially adopted by the governing board” (G.S. 160A 400.21). Under state law, comprehensive plans are not required or regulatory; however, zoning decisions should maintain consistency with locally adopted comprehensive plans. The Town of Davidson Board of Commissioners must approve a statement describing whether its action is consistent with comprehensive plans, but the statement will not be subject to judicial review. (See G.S. 160A-383 for the specific application of comprehensive plans as part of zoning decisions.)

“Under state law, comprehensive plans are not required or regulatory; however, zoning decisions should maintain consistency with locally adopted comprehensive plans.”

The Town of Davidson has a history of progressive planning, and worked to consolidate its many adopted policies and visions into a single plan through the Comprehensive Plan process. Beginning in the 1970s, the Town of Davidson created local land use plans and zoning ordinances. In the early 1990s, the town developed the General Plan to recommend policies through 2010. The General Plan was immediately followed by the Land Plan (adopted in 1995). The Land Plan was the base for the Davidson Planning Ordinance (adopted in 2001) which continues as Davidson’s regulatory framework for land development.

The Planning Ordinance reserves a section for the Comprehensive Plan and makes several references to a comprehensive plan throughout the ordinance. References to the Comprehensive Plan in the planning ordinance are made in context of open space planning, transportation planning, and viewshed protection.

The Comprehensive Plan considers a build-out scenario for growth rather than a specific horizon year, and requires updates on a regular basis as more information is collected about growth trends and policy innovation. The Comprehensive Plan provides recommendations for the town’s incorporated areas and extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The Comprehensive Plan, in large part, relies on previous plans to define a comprehensive vision and provides goals for the types, locations and strategies for public services, private investment, and civic involvement. The Town of Davidson Board of Commissioners will continue to recognize all of the officially adopted plans. Future plans will be consistent with The Comprehensive Plan’s goals and planning framework.



CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Three potential growth scenarios were evaluated in preparing the plan. The first scenario considered whether growth can and should be stopped completely. Regional growth pressures, private property rights, and economic demands require that Davidson continue to permit growth. However, while stopping growth is not a viable option, it can be directed. A second scenario considered growth potential per the current land use policies and adopted plans. The combined effect of current policies and plans would far exceed the projected demand for housing and commercial development, based on historic regional population and economic trends. Finally, the third scenario studied a more targeted growth model focusing on a balance between housing and jobs, well-planned extensions to infrastructure and public services, and the preservation of meaningful open space.

PREPARATION PROCESS

In early 2007, a subgroup of the Town of Davidson Planning Board, planning staff, and other interested residents met to discuss the need for a comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Plan Technical Committee worked for over the next year to draft a scope of work, researched examples of comprehensive plans from across the country, interviewed department heads, wrote a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for planning consultants, and presented their project budget and schedule recommendations to the Davidson Board of Commissioners in February 2008.

The Board of Commissioners authorized a consulting budget for the comprehensive plan in spring 2008, and staff and Comprehensive Plan Technical Committee members submitted the RFQ to planning consultants nationwide. Thirteen well-qualified teams of consultants submitted their qualifications; in July 2008, the Comprehensive Plan Technical Committee selected the team led by Rhodeside and Harwell, a landscape architecture and planning firm based on Alexandria, Virginia. The consulting team was selected based on similar work experience across the country, similarity in planning ideals, ability to work within the allocated budget, and local knowledge. Subconsultants included Urban Advisors (provided economic strategies and market information), Kubilins Transportation Group (provided recommendations for mobility), and Greenways Incorporated (provided information on environmental sustainability). Consultants were primarily responsible for drafting plan reports, evaluating technical data, and producing visual graphics.

THE PLANNING OUTREACH PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan was developed through a truly collaborative effort involving consultants, staff, regional partners, elected officials, planning board members, resident volunteers and local students. Several key committees were formed to guide the development of the plan including the Vision Committee and seven study groups. In July 2008, staff and elected officials organized the Comprehensive Plan Vision Committee, chaired by Georgia Krueger. The Vision Committee was composed of planning board members, town staff, consultants, a Davidson College representative and former commissioners. The Vision Committee provided guidance during the planning process and developed a vision statement for the plan. Vision Committee members were also responsible for reviewing draft documents and facilitating special topic forums in the spring of 2009.

In August 2008, staff requested that residents and local stakeholders consider participating in study groups. The study groups were organized by seven general topic areas: Community Character, Community Development, Environmental Sustainability, Economic Development, Mobility, Local Government, and Growth Management. The purpose of organizing by study area was to provide a general focus for group discussions; however, groups were also encouraged to explore ideas that did not fit neatly within their group's topic. Over 120 residents and stakeholders volunteered and were placed into study groups according to their relevant experience, training and interests. Study groups were responsible for brainstorming issues, providing draft goals and recommendations based on their discussions and research, and commenting on draft plan materials.



Members of the 2008-09 Davidson Planning Board were asked to facilitate these study groups during the core twelve months of the planning process. Study group members and planning board facilitators attended a kick-off workshop in November 2008. At the workshop, consultants and staff outlined the comprehensive plan process, described general goals for the plan, and invited participants to complete an initial survey. Study groups began by reviewing locally adopted plans, reports and other technical data. Planning board members began meeting with their study groups in early 2009, convening meetings at least once a month through October 2009, to discuss concerns and opportunities for Davidson's future.

Planning board members submitted minutes from study group discussions to staff. Most groups began by listing the issues they thought most pertinent to their group topic, outlining a process for reviewing town documents, and identifying issues to be researched. Many study groups arranged presentations by local and state-wide experts to help answer questions and identify possible solutions. Others organized field trips to better understand current conditions. In the fall of 2009, the study groups presented their ideas and concerns to the Board of Commissioners and staff at work session meetings. Members of the study groups were encouraged to work hard, provide reasonable recommendations, and participate in future planning initiatives and volunteer activities.

A group of approximately fifty local fifth through eighth grade students formed the Student Vision Committee and participated in the process. Members of the Student Vision Committee represented each of the private and public elementary and middle schools in the immediate area that educate Davidson residents. The Student Vision Committee provided the perspective of future residents and business owners in Davidson, and explained how the plan was or was not in line with their vision for Davidson's future. An advisory panel (six students selected from the Student Vision Committee) presented the draft plan to the Board of Commissioners at the March 23, 2010 work session.

The 2009 Board of Commissioners worked with Vision Committee members to organize and facilitate a series of public forums that took place in March and April 2009. The public forums challenged study group members and elected officials to dream big and face certain realities in the long term future.

"Our Economic Future", guest speakers including Michael Gallis (Gallis and Associates) and Ron Leitch (NC Department of Commerce)

"Getting it Built...Getting Involved", guest speakers Leamon Brice (Town Manager), Garfield Carr (former commissioner), Kathryn Sellers (United Family Services), and Martha Jenkins (community volunteer)

"Neighborhood Design and Housing", guest speakers Mary Newsom (Charlotte Observer) and Marguerite Williams (commissioner)

"What Does Sustainable Look Like?", guest speakers Dave Martin (former commissioner), Mike Dawson (Ingersoll Rand), Londa Strong (Cabarrus County Parks), and June Blotnick (Carolina Clean Air Coalition)

The Town of Davidson Board of Commissioners also held a series of mini-retreats focusing on the comprehensive plan. The first mini retreat was held jointly with the planning board in May 2009, and planning board members described the initial concerns and ideas developed by the study groups. In September 2009, the Board of Commissioners reviewed draft goals and recommendations produced by study groups and identified what they thought were the most important goals and missing concepts. Following several draft revisions, the 2010 Board of Commissioners adopted The Comprehensive Plan on August 10, 2010.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Little has changed with regard to the overall planning philosophy in Davidson over the past 25 years; however, the town's population has more than doubled and new residents have brought different expectations for this small, southern, college town. Mayor John Woods grew up in Davidson and described this change as "inevitable and a natural result of the development of our community." Mayor Woods goes on to say, "Davidson is a beautiful town with a 'sense of charm' only small, purposely friendly communities can sustain. Our citizens are neighborly, welcoming, and simultaneously distressed over the growing population and the effects of change on the sense of character. In addition, Davidson is a 'community citizen' in a region exhibiting fast-paced growth due to the importance of the Charlotte market, transportation availability – both roads and air – and the sense of optimism. New citizens bring new values, beliefs, and expectations. Davidson is stabilized by the presence of Davidson College in its midst, which also helps define the quality of life we enjoy. In the midst of dramatic changes in the past twenty-five years, our community has created its own 'development maturity' as if to communicate, 'you are welcome to develop here and you must develop in a manner to complement our community'."

"Our great challenge will be to find ways to continue to maintain this quality while absorbing possibly another threefold increase over the next 25 years. Will my children be able to return 25 years from now and continue to sense the special, distinct characteristics that define this town where they grew up? If so, we will have planned our future well." -- Bill Lawing, ETJ resident

ETJ resident, long-time Planning Board member Bill Lawing described the challenges for the next 25 years: "Davidson's citizens have worked hard to maintain a village-centered quality of life while absorbing a threefold population increase in 15 years. Our great challenge will be to find ways to continue to maintain this quality while absorbing possibly another threefold increase over the next 25 years. Will my children be able to return 25 years from now and continue to sense the special, distinct characteristics that define this town where they grew up? If so, we will have planned our future well."

A vision statement is a description of a place or organization in the future. It provides direction for the goals and recommendations presented in the comprehensive plan. This plan considered concerns of long-time residents, related statements adopted by the town, such as the eight General Principles for Planning, the Town of Davidson Mission Statement, and the Town of Davidson's Core Values. Other plans such as the General Plan, the Land Plan, and historic accounts of public conversations about the town's future were also referenced. The Vision Committee adopted the following vision statement for the comprehensive plan:

Davidson is a creative, safe, scholarly and healthy community that enjoys high quality public services and unique cultural and natural assets. We manage change based on our long-term vision, as defined by the Comprehensive Plan, that promotes livable and vibrant neighborhoods, businesses, landscapes, public spaces, relationships, and public-private partnerships.



THEMES FOR LIVABILITY

The comprehensive plan is inspired and guided by its Vision Statement and the following eight livability themes. These themes are the organizing elements of the Comprehensive Plan and are not in any priority order.

CREATE DIVERSE BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Businesses and the local economy thrive in an environment that builds on local assets and protects against threats to the community's quality of life. It is an environment in which the small entrepreneur and the international corporation can both thrive. Residents are able to work in Davidson, and employers are able to find skilled labor locally.

SUPPORT SAFE AND VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Well-designed spaces and neighborhoods depend on collective awareness and responsibility, consideration for others, flexibility and creativity. The "village" looks out for the welfare and safety of all its children, celebrates innovation and accomplishment, and provides public places for citizens to play, work, create, protest, worship, and rest.

PROMOTE CULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMIC AND AGE DIVERSITY

A resilient community needs a population of all ages, ethnicities, income levels, and faiths. It embraces many traditions, promotes personal and fiscal health, affirms a universal sense of place, reaches out to a variety of economic opportunities, and encourages social activity for persons of all ages.

ENCOURAGE COMMITTED CIVIC INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Civic life is sustained by local leaders, residents and business owners through generous volunteerism, mentoring, communication, and education. The expectation is that individual, families, neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, and local government will reach out to one another to receive and provide support.

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY CHOICES FOR TRANSPORTATION, FOOD AND ENERGY USE

Healthy lifestyles increasingly favor non-motorized travel, local foods, renewable energy, and recycled materials. Citizens and business owners find these sustainable choices to be as financially viable, convenient, and efficient than more conventional choices.

ENABLE FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Living ecosystems are blind to political boundaries, so their stewards must manage natural migration corridors, habitats, and the impact of human activity. Stewardship also acknowledges the natural succession, technological advancement, economic shifts, and human interest in the natural and cultural landscape all influence management plans.

CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES

An effective government is one that is open and is sustained by active citizen participation, well-managed spending, growing revenues, far-reaching vision, and dependable partnerships. Local government contributes to public life by protecting the health, safety and welfare of its citizens; equal access and innovative public services; and adequate levels of staffing.

MAINTAIN QUALITY DESIGN AND SOUND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Meaningful architecture and land development reflect the sound planning principles of the past and present, impose minimal impact on neighboring properties, provide goods and services within walkable distances, protect sensitive natural areas, and discourage the unnecessary conversion of open space to developed uses.



IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan is a vision for the town's future requiring collaboration and frequent communication between the various stakeholders responsible for implementing the plan. The Town of Davidson (local government staff and elected officials) will be a primary stakeholder as it allocates resources - such as staff, budget and facilities - toward project development. Major landowners, citizens, Davidson College, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, business owners, private investors, and other government agencies should also consider the Comprehensive Plan as they draft their own goals and strategic plans. Without these partnerships the vision will never be realized.

Strategic plans with deadlines, responsible parties and resources will not be identified within the comprehensive plan. The town recognizes that forces influencing its long-term future will change unpredictably; therefore, ongoing evaluation of the comprehensive plan is the most effective way to implement the vision described.

The Town of Davidson wants to continue a transparent and citizen-led process for determining how the goals of this Comprehensive Plan should be implemented. The Davidson Planning Board has been instrumental during the development of the Comprehensive Plan and is identified by state statute as the group most responsible for providing recommendations for long-range planning to the Board of Commissioners. So, the Planning Board should continue to be a partner with staff and elected officials as the town identifies short term goals and policies.

On an annual basis, the Planning Board will submit goals from the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration, most likely during an early fall joint work session meeting. Prior to the Planning Board's goal submittal, local residents and stakeholder groups will be encouraged to submit their comments regarding the implementation of the comprehensive plan to the Planning Board for their consideration. These goals will be considered along with goals submitted by town staff and other advisory boards at the following annual Board of Commissioners retreat. The Board of Commissioners may ask residents and volunteers, such as the Planning Board, to identify strategic action steps or otherwise assist in the implementation of specific goals. As part of the adopted budget, staff will be asked to follow the implementation steps in the following fiscal year. Within a two-year time frame, goals and strategies should be identified, resources (money and staff time) should be allocated, and projects should be completed.

The Comprehensive Plan will be referenced as the town creates capital improvement plans, specific action or staffing plans, and future policies and ordinances. The Comprehensive Plan will primarily inform physical development projects or decisions through amendments to the Davidson Planning Ordinance, municipal codes, and regulatory policies of town departments. Each year, staff should identify ordinances to be revised for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, such as zoning changes or ordinance text revisions. Small area plans, topical studies or additional research may be necessary before ordinances and policies are revised or as follow-up to goals stated in the Comprehensive Plan. All future small area plans and studies should be consistent with the comprehensive plan's vision and goals.

The Comprehensive Plan should be updated at least once every ten years. This update will require new statistics such as socioeconomic and business trends and land use data. The Planning Board, staff and other citizens will assist through a public participation process by evaluating how the town has applied the Comprehensive Plan to land development, local services, and capital decisions. While the vision of the comprehensive plan (described by the vision statement and livability themes) should not change substantially, specific goals and recommendations may be revised to reflect more current realities.

Chapter 2



CURRENT CONDITIONS & CHALLENGES



“Open communication is essential to an engaged citizenry, so town government will seek and provide accurate, timely information and promote public discussion of important issues.”

-Town of Davidson Core Value

Chapter 2



CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

Chapter 2 reviews the town's and region's history, including the town's history of planning. Existing plans, policies, and partnerships are summarized as current conditions according to the seven study areas. Overall concerns are presented at the end of the chapter and organized by the Livability Themes and are key considerations of future growth.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL HISTORY

The North Carolina Piedmont region was first settled by Scotch-Irish immigrants in the mid 1700s, with Davidson's roots tracing back to the founding of Davidson College in 1837. Typical of many communities in the western Piedmont, Davidson College and the adjacent town remained isolated until the arrival of steady railroad service after the Civil War. The north-south Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad (later part of the Southern Railway) joined Charlotte in Mecklenburg County with Statesville in Iredell County in 1861, passing through the small college town just west of Main Street. By 1874, the railroad provided steady rail service to Davidson, and the college town began to expand as a shipping point for cash crops (mainly cotton) and a service center for farmers, similar to other small railroad communities in the western Piedmont. The community of Davidson College incorporated in 1879.

Davidson has a similar economic history to that of its neighbors between the 1880s and 1920s, but the Town of Davidson was uniquely impacted by the aesthetic and academic culture of Davidson College. Reliable railroad service (reactivated in 1874) arrived in the area after the Civil War, connecting the villages and hamlets to major trade and industrial centers such as Statesville and Charlotte. Textile mills were built reinforcing the local cotton industry in the region, including Davidson's Delburg and Linden Mills. African-American neighborhoods emerged by the early twentieth century to support local mills and other institutions, such as Davidson College, settling in mill villages near the railroad and behind the downtown business district.

In 1891, the town's name changed from Davidson College to Davidson, which symbolized the community's expanding roles. The Linden Cotton Factory opened in 1890, and in 1908, the Delburg Cotton Mills opened; both merged together in 1923 as the Delburg Manufacturing Company, later called the Davidson Cotton Mill. The Main Street business district, lined with contiguous rows of simple, red-brick stores facing Davidson College, developed to serve the needs of Davidson College students, professors and local farmers. Over time, this compact commercial district gave way to residential blocks that accommodated the families of merchants and other businessmen, including South Main Street and adjacent Potts Street (originally part of South Main), which saw a wave of residential construction during the 1880s and 1890s. Additionally, between 1900 and the Great Depression, the town's business district evolved from a mixture of brick and frame stores and houses, into contiguous rows of one- and two-story, brick commercial buildings. Behind Main Street, along the railroad tracks, was the depot, a livery, flour mill, saw mill, cotton gins, a cotton seed oil company, a blacksmith shop, and a buggy manufacturer.

The town's population in the early twentieth century included approximately 500 residents, which climbed to 1,500 by the 1920s. During this time, North Main Street and Concord Road developed as the town's premier residential streets, lined with well-preserved houses which, even today, illustrate a range of mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century architectural styles. In 1911, the town established the Davidson Graded School with local taxes. Today, the only remaining feature of the school is the gym; however, a public school exists today on the same site.

In 1923, the state improved Main Street (NC 115), which served as a portion of the highway between Charlotte and Statesville, and named it the Davidson College Highway. The town halls for Mooresville, Davidson, Cornelius and Huntersville were placed along NC 115, as well as most of the major churches and business districts. As part of the road improvements, the original south Main Street, below Walnut Street, became Potts Street. A new south Main Street was extended toward the Town of Cornelius, which, along



CHAPTER 2 - CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

with a railroad underpass, marked the south end of Davidson. The Davidson Colored School opened for African-American children in 1938, and was renamed the Ada Jenkins School in 1955 in honor of teacher and guidance counselor, Ada Jenkins.

In the decades after World War II, commercial patterns changed significantly in the area surrounding the business district, including the closing of the Davidson Cotton Mill in the 1950s. The demise of cotton farming and decline of other agricultural pursuits in Mecklenburg County effectively ended the town’s role as a farming service center. Meanwhile, improved highways encouraged residents to frequent larger department stores in nearby cities such as those in Charlotte. But perhaps the most significant changes to the region included the completion of Lake Norman (1963) and Interstate 77 (1968). Each reduced the amount of available land for farming and redefined the “entryways” to the towns.

Significant Planning Milestones: 1973 Marine World

Citizens of Davidson have always been civic-minded and vocal in their support of or opposition to proposed changes. In 1973, Davidson residents opposed a multimillion dollar proposal by Marine World to locate on the 64-acre peninsula of Lake Norman west of I-77. The amusement park was slated to include marine animal exhibits, a yacht club, boutiques, high-end retail, restaurants, theatres, and highrise hotels. The Davidson Citizens Association argued against the proposal and the town ultimately refused to provide sewer service to the site.

Exclusive, lakeshore communities exploded in the 1990s in Cornelius and Mooresville, while high-end subdivisions popped up along rural roads throughout the region. In the early 1990s, the towns in Mecklenburg County agreed to spheres of influence, resulting in the towns’ Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJ). The Town of Davidson also expanded its town limits and ETJ into southern Iredell County in the 1990s. The Town of Davidson grew by approximately 75% between 1990 and 2000, adding approximately 3,000 new residents (approximately 1,000 new households). In 1990, Davidson had the largest population of the three northern Mecklenburg towns, but due to a relatively slow growth rate it became the smallest municipality in the lake region by 2000. See Figure 2.1: Growth Rate of Davidson and Neighboring Municipalities. Currently, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville and Mooresville have over 100,000 residents combined.

A reputation for good quality of life in Lake Norman region resulted in dramatic increases to property values over the past decade. Residents of the region have one of the highest average per capita income and education attainment levels in the state. The three northern Mecklenburg County towns are all part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) system, and the local elementary and middle schools are among the highest performing in the system. Several recently constructed facilities include schools in north Mecklenburg County. However, the growing student population has far outpaced construction by CMS, resulting in overcrowding.

Figure 2.1: Growth Rate of Davidson and Neighboring Municipalities

	1990	2000	2010 (est)
Cornelius	2,581	11,969	25,000
Growth Rate		364%	109%
Davidson	4,046	7,139	10,500
Growth Rate		76%	47%
Huntersville	3,014	24,960	45,000
Growth Rate		728%	80%
Mooresville	9,317	18,823	30,000
Growth Rate		102%	59%



The Lake Norman region has also made a name for itself as a rising employment center. Proximity to regional airports, a highly educated workforce, and railroads have drawn significant industries and employers to the region. The largest employer in the four town region is Lowe’s in southern Iredell County, and the next tier includes large employers in Davidson (Ingersoll Rand and Davidson College). The three northern Mecklenburg County towns jointly fund the Lake Norman Economic Development Commission which recruits new major industries or corporations to jointly-funded business parks.

Davidson has established and must maintain good working relationships with adjoining jurisdictions, regional agencies, and state government in order to secure funding for local projects, provide efficient public services, and manage the impacts and opportunities of development activity. Development pressure, economic need and transportation concerns have brought the towns together to jointly fund and coordinate small area and transportation plans, including the following:

- NC 73 Transportation/Land Use Corridor Plan (2004)
- NC 73 Davidson-Concord Road Small Area Land Use and Economic Development Plan (2005)
- Davidson Concord Road – NC 73 Area Plan (2008)
- Urban Land Institute North Corridor Study (2010)
- Interlocal agreements regarding access to and restrictions on Lake Davidson

PLANNING HISTORY AND CURRENT GROWTH POTENTIAL

Guiding Plans, Principles and Values

Since the 1990s, planning has been an active community-wide undertaking in Davidson, and multiple plans and regulations have been developed that aim to preserve the character of Davidson and policies needed to guide and direct anticipated change. Goals established by the 1993 General Plan to preserve Davidson as a small town include retaining the visual, aesthetic, and social qualities that make Davidson a desirable place to live and work, and ensuring that new development does not compromise the existing character of the town.

Significant Town Milestones: 1993 General Plan

Seventeen years ago, in May of 1993, the Board of Commissioners approved the “Davidson General Plan: Guidance Through the Year 2010.” Steered by a task force of 15 citizens, the plan included six Overriding Principles:

- Future development and enhancement projects should foster interaction among Davidson residents.
- Priority should be given to the pedestrian. The Town’s pedestrian orientation should be preserved.
- Davidson should remain a safe place to live and raise a family.
- The cultural and socioeconomic diversity that Davidson enjoys should be continued and promoted.
- Davidson’s compact development patterns should be reflected in new development to retain visual character and to preserve open space.
- Ties to the rural heritage of Davidson should be retained as new development occurs.

Similar to the Comprehensive Plan , the 1993 General Plan included community concerns and recommendations that went beyond the jurisdiction of town government. The goals, policies, and ideas identified in the plan could only be realized through joint efforts of the town, private citizens, the business community, and civic organizations.



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The protection of Davidson's small town aesthetic was heavily influenced by the town's 1995 Land Plan which acknowledged that Davidson's identity as a small town went beyond its size and population to include its compact and walkable neighborhoods and downtown, its predominantly undeveloped rural landscape, and the identifiable change in land uses and density that separates the town from the countryside. The Land Plan preserved and strengthened Davidson's small town aesthetic through carefully structured development guidelines for four distinct planning areas in the town.

The Town of Davidson Mission Statement and Core Values guide local government decision-makers (i.e. elected officials and town staff) as they consider policy, capital plans, and public services. The Mission Statement and Core Values were first adopted in 1999 and are reviewed and revised on an annual basis. The Comprehensive Plan has also been adopted by the Town of Davidson, and is therefore also used for guidance. Whereas the Mission Statement and Core Values specify the responsibilities and expectations for public services and governance, the Comprehensive Plan outlines likely outcomes of those services. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates significant collaboration with community partners to help implement the goals. If there are goals stated in the Comprehensive Plan do not have an associated core value, then the town should consider revising the Mission Statement and Core Values to ensure that staff and elected officials understand their responsibilities for carrying out the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Davidson Planning Ordinance (adopted 2001) is the current set of codes regarding the use, arrangement, and distribution of land and building development. The planning ordinance is periodically amended to reflect recent trends and statistics, citizen expectations, and changes in state law. The Comprehensive Plan should inform changes or additions to the planning principles and planning ordinance in order to guide the shape, timing and rights of future land development.

The planning principles, in the first section of the planning ordinance, are as follows:

- We must preserve Davidson's status as a small town
- We must preserve and enhance Davidson's unique downtown
- Growth must be sustainable
- We must preserve substantial amounts of open space
- We must re-establish our historic diversity of people
- Development must proceed no faster than the town can provide public facilities
- In Davidson we rely on a unique combination of private property rights and the health of the community as a whole
- Architecture and planning can either enhance or deteriorate the quality of life

The Davidson Police Department and the Board of Commissioners adopted the Four Point Plan in 2008 to guide decisions about types and levels of service for police protection. The Four Point Plan sets out to accomplish the following:

- Create a culture within the Davidson Police Department emphasizing:
 - Professionalism
 - Ethics
 - Accountability
 - Teamwork
- Develop a structured set of standards and process
- Develop "generalist" police officers
- Train and commit to a community-oriented and problem-solving style of policing

Other departments have developed guidelines, mission statements or principles for decision-making that have not yet been adopted by the Board of Commissioners. Each department should work with board members to adopt guidelines and principles as those created for the planning and police departments.



ONGOING CITIZEN CONCERNS

Citizen perceptions and expectations for growth have been significant influences on local planning policy. Community surveys in 1996 and 2007 indicated strong community interest in smart growth, pedestrian access, open space preservation, and small town character. Comprehensive plan study group members responded to three questions at a November 2008 public workshop (see Figure 2.2). The responses demonstrate that residents are well educated about planning and regional growth pressures. Residents continue to be concerned about open space preservation, transportation, and economic vitality. Other significant issues, such as housing and local governance have also been identified in survey responses and recent planning studies.

Figure 2.2 Study Group Survey Results - November 2008
1. What are the top 3 issues that you feel the Comp Plan should address?
<i>Issue</i>
Preservation of open space and protection of green space
Better road connectivity/maintenance and traffic flow
A viable economy that is diverse and sustainable
2. Which do you value most about living in Davidson today?
<i>Issue</i>
“Small Town” quality
Better road connectivity/maintenance and traffic flow
A connected street pattern that is also physically accessible
Relationship between Town and Davidson College
3. If you were to leave Davidson and return in 10 years, what would you hope to see here?
<i>Issue</i>
Public transit
That it has remained a “Small Town”
Better mix of appropriate commercial uses downtown
Preserved wildlife habitats, open space and greenspace

Open Space

Stewardship of natural resources, such as the lakes and streams, became more strictly regulated by Davidson, surrounding towns and state agencies in the 1990s because of increased awareness of the dangers to drinking water supply, loss of the rural landscape and habitat quality. Currently, Mecklenburg County’s Land Use and Environmental Services Agency administers most engineering, environmental and code enforcement on behalf of town.

Significant loss of open space and tree cover in the region caused the Town of Davidson to create an Open Space Plan in 2001. This plan studied existing conditions and policies, and created an implementation plan to achieve the following open space goals:

- Preserve 50% of the ETJ as open space (first stated as goal in 1995 Land Plan)
- Provide public access to 50% of the open space within the ETJ
- Encourage walkable, mixed-use communities
- Protect the scenic quality and character of the rural areas
- Protect water quality
- Retain equity for ETJ landowners



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The 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance pulled from previous planning initiatives, such as the Open Space Plan and Land Plan, and implemented the following policies regarding open space:

- 50% open space preservation required in rural area
- Tree permit required for all tree removal
- Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) buffers, Watershed Protection Areas, Floodplain Regulations
- Tree Preservation and Landscaping Ordinance

Significant Town Milestones: 1999 Open Space Plan

“Kingcaid” and “Stop the Land Grab!” signs proliferated throughout Davidson’s rural area during the fall of 1999. Rural residents were concerned that their property values would plummet if the “Open Space Plan” being considered by the Board of Commissioners was approved. It included a far-reaching provision that 50% of each new development be retained as open space. After many contentious meetings, then-Mayor Randy Kincaid offered a compromise that illustrated how confident they were that property values would rise rather than fall: If a property owner’s land value fell after passage of the ordinance, the town would purchase their land for the pre-ordinance value. No one acted on the offer, as the land values in the rural area continued to climb after approval of the ordinance.

2000 Ten Million Dollar Pledge

Separately but concurrently with the approval of the “Open Space Plan,” in 2000, the Board of Commissioners pledged up to 10 million dollars to purchase open space. The first purchase was 200-acre Fisher Farm in 2002. The farm was previously under option to a large national developer, but development of over 1000 proposed homes would have necessitated extending sewer into the area, an idea that was rejected by the Board of Commissioners during the approval of the General Plan in 1993. The Board had the authority to reject sewer extensions because they had retained that right in the 1980’s when the town sold its utility systems to CMUD.

In 2008, the town initiated the Greenprint, or Natural Assets Inventory, to better understand existing valuable natural resources and the complexities of preserving them. The Natural Assets Stakeholder Committee, which included citizens and resource professionals, identified the following issues:

QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE: The Town’s rural open space policy is effective in preserving undeveloped property and allows the developer several options for the use, ownership and management of the open space. In 2002, the town was responsible for maintaining a little over 36 acres of open space. By 2008, the town was responsible for maintaining over 380 acres of open space, largely because of public purchase and dedication as part of development. However, the quality and usability of dedicated of open space does not seem to place a preference on high quality habitat areas.

FARMLAND CONVERSION AND LAND VALUATION: Land values have escalated in the rural area making it more attractive, in some cases unavoidable, for farmers to sell property for development because of increased property values. Trends in the agricultural economy have also changed the landscape as farmers move from crop production to livestock and timber management.

CONTIGUOUS OPEN SPACE: Open space connectivity has proven difficult to achieve across property lines. Continuity of open space is critical to sustained animal habitat because it allows safe corridors for migration and large tracts for large animal habitat.

SCENIC VIEWSHED PRESERVATION: Much of Davidson’s natural heritage is associated with expansive views of farmland and tree-topped rolling hills. It is difficult to define and protect priority viewsheds.



MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVED OPEN SPACE: If open spaces are not properly managed, there is risk of conversion to developed or compromised natural resources. Poorly written deed restrictions, insufficient environmental inventories and allowable active uses of preserved open space make it difficult to maintain the quality of the natural environment.

RURAL SPRAWL: In the rural area, residential development is the primary permitted land use. Current policies do not set maximum lot sizes and, especially where public wastewater systems are not available, individual lots are an average two acres or greater in size. In larger lot subdivisions, homes are not satisfactorily clustered; they create fragmented and marginal pockets of common or privately-owned open space.

WETLAND BUFFERS: The Davidson Planning Ordinance has made great strides toward stream and water quality protection with its SWIM and lakeshore buffer requirements. However, wetlands are not addressed, in spite of their critical role in water quality protection and habitat provision. Large wetlands in Davidson most often occur along major streams, but may also occur in upland areas.

TREE CANOPY LOSS: American Forests, a nation-wide environmental advocacy group, studied change in tree canopy and impervious development between 1984 and 2001, and showed a 22% decrease of tree canopy throughout Davidson's planning jurisdiction. Local tree preservation ordinances broadly require tree save as part of multi-family and commercial developments. However, the intensities of these types of land uses limit the capacity for saving existing trees and no provisions are available for saving existing tree canopy in single-family residential development (which constituted the majority of development types during the 1990s and 2000s).

LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS: The installation and maintenance of new street trees is often done incorrectly, threatening to starve the tree of nutrients, oxygen or root stability. Developers and residents are oftentimes unaware that a tree they plant is susceptible to disease, in conflict with utility management guidelines, or perhaps an invasive species. There is a similar lack of understanding among residents about the protected status of a farmed property or trees along property lines.

Transportation

Two main north-south roadways connect the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, and Mooresville: Interstate 77 and NC 115. 80,000 to 90,000 cars a day pass through the lake region on I-77, and 12,000 to 18,000 cars use NC 115 each day. The three northern Mecklenburg County towns also share NC 73 as a primary east-west corridor. Most residents in the region drive at least 25 minutes to work, choosing to live in the more rural or suburban communities and work in the urban centers. State maintained roads and highways are congested with commuters and visitors passing through the region, sometimes posing threats to cyclists, pedestrians and local traffic.

Beginning in 2002, the town began a series of studies related to connectivity, traffic safety, and multi-modal accessibility. These studies focused on bicycle and pedestrian safety, coordination with the planned land use context, bicycle facility design, and regional traffic demands. Planned thoroughfare road connections are intended to meet capacity demand for regional travelers. The challenge lies in balancing their regional significance while ensuring that local traffic remains on the local streets.

Timing of new route construction in undeveloped areas will be critical in preventing diversion of traffic away from a thriving village center. If the routes were drawn to be more circuitous, they would serve regional traffic, but not be as convenient for local trips. The town may want to re-evaluate the location of proposed rural routes by looking somewhat differently at existing property lines and topographic constraints. It is best to retain the concept of the proposed connections, but at a low level of priority and not to the detriment of local mobility. This approach demonstrates recognition of the need for regional accommodation over the long-term vision, while still acknowledging the need for connections near and to the downtown as the most beneficial to the community in the shorter-term.



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In addition, the proposed routes need to be designed to complement their rural context. Current road design practices can maintain existing character while opening the area for mobility purposes and recreational enjoyment. Pavement options are available to minimize impervious area, storm water management techniques can enhance water quality through the introduction of appropriate filtering flora, and multi-purpose paths running parallel to roadways would be a community benefit. Land uses should be carefully planned along these roads.

Funding of these projects is also critical to successful mobility in Davidson and the region. However, state funding is shrinking while construction costs are increasing. Consequently, the Town of Davidson relies on development to build new road and greenway connections. Mobility projects outside the scope of development will have to be publicly funded. The town has identified tens of millions of dollars of needed transportation improvements, far exceeding projected budgets for local construction projects. Staff should continue to seek grants and state funding to build the majority of these projects, but the town will also have to use local revenue to design and construct several projects.

Regional coordination is essential to planning future road connections and improvements. Tens of thousands of regional commuters pass through Davidson daily, especially when major highways and interstates are blocked. So while Davidson is not largely responsible for the increased traffic on local roadways, the town must be a part of the solution. Town staff and elected officials are participating in regional transportation discussions and planning, promoting context-sensitive design and multi-modal safety and studying the impacts of planned roads in adjacent jurisdictions on Davidson's local network. A number of planned road improvements are likely to have major influence on volumes of traffic on local roads if implemented, including:

- Widening of I-77 to eight-lanes, possibly to include a High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane in each direction
- Creation of I-77 Exits 27, 31 and 35
- Widening of NC 115 in Iredell County and Cornelius
- Widening of NC 73 to four-lanes and several new controlled intersections
- Extension of Prosperity Church Road from Charlotte through Huntersville to NC 73
- Widening of Poplar Tent Road
- Widening of NC 3 in Cabarrus County

Extensions of local roads provide congestion relief and enhance the ease of movement for residents. Regional traffic should be accommodated on a network of routes through the town, such as the Potts/Sloan/Beatty corridor and the Main Street corridor. The proposed transit station will add to the demand for adequate access within the village center. Adhering to a "complete streets" policy will ensure that all new streets equally serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicle drivers.

In summary, project prioritization will be important as the town moves into the implementation phases of transportation plans. Priority-setting for road construction projects should include the following considerations:

TIMING AND COST OVER A LONG TIMEFRAME: While cost may assign a project lower priority for immediate funding, a strategy is needed to reserve funding for lower priority projects.

SAFETY: This should always be the most important issue for consideration.

SENSITIVITY TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ROAD CONNECTION: An important evaluation tool during the planning, design and construction phases, environmental impacts of the proposed road connection should be considered in conjunction with other related development projects in the route's vicinity.

LOCAL MOBILITY: Quality of life for residents and business owners is significantly impacted by access to local greenways, sidewalks, bikeways, and neighborhood street connectivity. Multimodal facilities and good connectivity must remain high priorities for future construction.



Economic Vitality

EMPLOYMENT: In the last decade, Mecklenburg County experienced positive employment trends, with Professional and Business/Technical Services showing the strongest growth over the last four years, and Health and Social Services, as well as Accommodation and Food Services, both generating a significant amount of new employment. The forecasted strong growth potential and Davidson’s current demographics make it well-suited to capture a good portion of the regional markets in the Professional and Business/ Technical Services industries. By building on its existing assets, including its educated, professional workforce and its intact and functioning downtown area, Davidson should be able to attract a significant portion of this employment market.

But, how much market can Davidson sustain? One way to answer this question is by setting a goal for the balance between the number of people in the local work force and the number of jobs in the same area. This is called the job-to-housing balance. At present, Davidson does not appear to have a balance between jobs and residents: the 2000 Census indicates that 73% of town residents drove to work (typically in single occupancy vehicles), 12% walked, and 5% worked at home. The average commuting time was 25 minutes. These figures suggest that there are not enough jobs available for the local workforce.

To balance the existing working population with the same number of local jobs would require over 2,000 new jobs within the town, occupying approximately 900,000 square feet of employment space. Moreover, in order to achieve a jobs-to-housing balance that can accommodate a longer-term projected workforce, the town could reasonably accommodate 2 to 4 million square feet of new employment and commercial space by 2030. See Figure 2.3: Davidson Goals for Employment Space.

Figure 2.3: Davidson Goals for Employment Space			
	2008 (existing)	2030 (low)	2030 (high)
Households	2,598	5,000	8,000
Population	8,330	16,000	21,000
Workforce (62%)	5,165	10,000	13,000
Current Jobs	-2,975	-5,165	-5,165
New Employment Goal	2,190	5,000	8,000
New Space Required (400 Sq Ft /worker)	900,000	2,000,000	3,200,000
Total New Employment Space Goal (SF)		2,900,000	4,100,000
<i>Source: Mecklenburg Union MPO; US Energy Information Administration; Urban Advisors Ltd.</i>			

RETAIL: An analysis of retail within the Town of Davidson in 2008 identified approximately 219,000 square feet in the town as a whole, with approximately 90% of that (or approximately 197,000 square feet) in the downtown and Exit 30 areas. Nevertheless, a 2008 consumer spending analysis estimated that current residents spend enough to support more than 300,000 square feet of retail. Thus, much of the town’s potential spending power is “leaking” outside Davidson’s boundaries to nearby shopping alternatives. This does not include the spending potential as the town population continues to grow. It is anticipated that, over the longer term, the town will be able to support between 400,000 and 800,000 square feet of retail space based on projected population growth.



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Moreover, residents prefer retail businesses that create a walkable destination. Walkable retail centers support livability by creating expanded business and job opportunities in town; implementing sustainable lifestyle choices for transportation, personal development, food and energy use; and achieving good stewardship of the land and natural resources.

Local demand for retail and other commercial business should not compete with the regional demand for additional commercial business. Marketing studies for the Davidson area reveal that local residents and the regional population are driving excessive distances to shop for household goods. Shoppers desire a variety of shopping environments, services, and goods; and Davidson is well-positioned to capture a portion of the regional market. Davidson’s vision for independently-owned, specialty retail and services in compact and walkable commercial centers would not compete with big-box and corporate retail found elsewhere. Neither are the jobs to be created only for residents of Davidson. Additional jobs created in Davidson can be filled by residents from other towns and cities while Davidson residents still have the choice to work elsewhere.

There has been significant growth in local retail and office business space recently, but the percentage of jobs in industrial (Ingersoll Rand) or institutional (Davidson College) still represents a large majority of local jobs. If one of Davidson’s major employers or industries was to relocate or fail, the town would be dealt a significant loss in job availability. The town must diversify its employment base to include more small and mid-sized businesses.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Given the business sectors likely to be attracted to Davidson, as well as the existing proportion of firm sizes in Mecklenburg County, much of this employment space should be provided in buildings of less than 20,000 square feet. Furthermore, an equivalent amount of space should be planned for businesses requiring less than 8,000 square feet as for those requiring 100,000 or more square feet. This kind of space would be consistent with the scale of the town’s downtown area and of other proposed mixed-use nodes, and would support Davidson’s goals to expand business and job opportunities within a context of sustainable lifestyle choices and responsible land stewardship. Independent, specialty businesses and medium-sized professional offices are good fits for these commercial floorplates (square feet) and resident expectations. Big-box retail and stand alone drive-thru businesses would not work well within these parameters and expectations. See Figure 2.4: Davidson Employment Space Program 2010-2030

Figure 2.4: Davidson Employment Space Program 2010-2030

Employees per Firm	Firm Size (SF)	%	Anticipated Program (SF)
0 - 20	0 - 8,000	24%	500,000 - 1,000,000
20 - 50	8,000 - 20,000	19%	400,000 - 800,000
50 - 100	20,000 - 40,000	15%	300,000 - 600,000
100 - 250	30,000 - 100,000	18%	400,000 - 700,000
250 +	100,000 +	24%	500,000 - 1,000,000
Total		100%	2,000,000 - 4,100,000

Source: Mecklenburg Union MPO; US Energy Information Administration; Urban Advisors Ltd.

DOWNTOWN: In order for the town to become established as a regional destination, the downtown area needs to be expanded to provide two to three hours of entertainment, dining and retail shopping. Generally speaking, this requires at least three times the amount of square footage currently accommodated by commercial businesses in downtown Davidson today. New restaurants and bars, theaters, music venues, and galleries would attract new young residents as well as regional tourists.

The town also values socioeconomic diversity, but has observed the out-migration of low to moderate income families, young graduates and minorities. In order to retain or attract these populations, businesses



providing a variety of entertainment, recreation and goods are needed downtown. A variety of jobs within all sectors and income levels-- such as waitstaff, dental hygienists and accountants-- will also be necessary to achieve a socioeconomically diverse population.

Housing

POPULATION GROWTH: Davidson grew by approximately 75% throughout the 1990s, adding approximately 3,000 new residents (approximately 1,000 households). Current regional growth models indicate that Davidson could absorb almost 2,000 additional households by 2030, if the town grows at a rate of 2.6% in the 2010s, and 1.9% in the 2020s. Alternatively, historical growth trends from the Census Bureau indicate Davidson’s population has grown at an annual rate of over 4% for the last 18 years (over 5% in the 1990s), which if continued, could demand almost 2,400 additional households by 2020, and 2,800 more by 2030. Therefore, the town will likely need to absorb somewhere between 2,000 and 5,000 new households over the next two decades. See Figure 2.5: Davidson Low and High Growth Projections.

In order to encourage regional and federal agencies to construct the North Main Line (commuter rail corridor), much of this new housing will be needed in the downtown area. There are several redevelopable sites available along South Main Street, Jackson Street and Griffith Street to accommodate higher density townhomes, condominiums and apartments.

HOUSING TYPES: Artists, young professionals and new graduates are looking for alternative housing choices. Co-housing, cottage-style housing, lofts, and rental apartments are attractive options to the creative

class – an important demographic to encouraging more night life. Large-lot single family subdivisions on undeveloped, rural properties is not a desirable direction for meeting future housing needs. Given the current population mix, and the lifestyle segments that this mix represents for economic forecasting purposes, it is likely that at least half of the incoming population will be looking alternatives to the single-family, detached housing unit, with many seeking townhome, apartment and condominium products.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: In order to promote socioeconomic diversity, the town will continue to require affordable housing. Infill lots in the Village Infill Planning Area, properties dedicated for affordable housing in new developments, and publicly owned property are the best places to locate these new units.

SENIOR HOUSING: As more seniors retire or choose to age-in-place, more accessible housing is needed. Ordinance requirements may address the ability for future development to provide senior-friendly housing, but affordable housing providers will need to be proactive and build neighborhoods that attract active seniors and retirees.

Figure 2.5: Davidson Low and High Growth Projections

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Projections	Census	Census	Projected	Projected	Projected
Population Low (RTDM)	4,046	7,139	10,305	13,000	16,000
Annual Growth	-	5.84%	4.43%	2.60%	1.88%
Household Size	3.63	3.36	3.29	3.17	3.20
Households	1,115	2,122	3,100	4,100	5,000
Population High (trend)	4,046	7,139	10,305	15,000	21,000
Annual Growth	-	5.84%	4.43%	3.63%	3.63%
Household Size	3.63	3.36	3.12	2.87	2.64
Households	1,115	2,122	3,300	5,200	8,000

Source: 1990-2000 data, US Census Bureau; RTDM (2005 Regional Travel Demand Model projections), Mecklenburg Union MPO; Urban Advisors Ltd.



Local Governance

The Town of Davidson must continue to provide high quality services for its residents in spite of the current economic downturn and future uncertainties. The town strives to achieve a balance of between commercial and residential uses and continue to support the quality life residents and visitors have come to enjoy.

A recent UNC Charlotte Urban Institute study found that the style and location of development often factors largely in the balance of cost of services versus tax value of land uses. Commercial development that occurs in an unplanned or piecemeal manner may actually worsen a jurisdiction's financial position rather than improve it. On the other hand, more traditional town (rather than suburban) development patterns are likely to reduce a jurisdiction's overall costs while increasing its revenues. Growing incrementally, or in phases, reduces the impacts of development on service costs by providing time for reevaluating needs, types of uses, densities and locations of future growth. Concentrating new development within proximity of the downtown and future transit nodes and planning for mixed uses as well as a jobs-housing balance Davidson minimize public service costs. In summary, officials and elected leaders will have to address the following challenges:

PROPERTY TAX BASE: Davidson's property tax base is approximately 83% residential and 17% commercial, which means most revenue comes from residential uses. Most fiscal analysts agree that it costs more to provide public services (schools, roads, permitting and inspections, police and fire protection, etc.) to residential properties than commercial properties. Therefore, the amount of revenue received by the town is generally disproportionate to the demand for services by residents. Consequently, the town must continue to seek ways to increase the commercial share of its tax base.

SALES TAX REVENUES: Sales tax revenues in Davidson have remained fairly steady over the past several years primarily because many of the major employers in the town do not generate significant sales tax (Davidson College and Ingersoll Rand). By diversifying the types of industry to include more retail and service-oriented business, the town will receive more sales tax revenue.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OR FACILITY NEEDS: The Town of Davidson is also faced with numerous facility challenges. The town's Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating demands that a new fire station be built in the Davidson-Concord Road or NC 73 area to accommodate current development. The town is studying potential sites for the future station and developing cost estimates. Construction will likely begin in 2010 or 2011.

As new local programs, services and staff are added, new local government facilities will become necessary. As the residential population grows, larger meeting space will be important for community meetings. New local government facilities should be located in a mixed use setting in the downtown area and within close proximity to other local government facilities.

Significant Town Milestones: 1992 Davidson Branch Library

Another example of Davidson citizens working together to improve their community: In 1992 the Public Library of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County (PLCMC) began consolidation of smaller branches into larger regional libraries. They were interested in closing the old Davidson branch, but ran into vocal opposition from citizens who appreciated that their library was within walking distance of schools, businesses, and many homes. Davidson College, owner of the village green, offered land and actually built the new building; the town bought the building from the college and leased it to the library system for 15 years, after which the building is rent-free to PLCMC for 35 years; and residents organized and raised funds to furnish the building, pay for the front and side porches, and create an endowment. The building was dedicated in 1995.



CURRENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK: APPROVED, PLANNED AND PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Over the past twenty years, the Town of Davidson has carefully dealt with the tension between legal rights of property owners and the expectations of citizens for strictly controlled growth. The town created a framework for guiding growth and change in Davidson through robust ordinances, illustrative plans, multi-faceted citizen involvement, strong code enforcement, good public communication, and committed leadership. The combined growth potential from these plans, developments and policies is based on the following:

- Development projects already approved by the town but not constructed or completed
- Small area plans for specific areas
- The Davidson Planning Ordinance which designates by-right development

The Town of Davidson has created a series of small area plans, blueprints for future development based on community input. Some development projects within these small area plans have been partially constructed to date. See the Appendix for a list of the small area plans referenced in the current growth framework. The town has also approved or issued permits for sites outside of the boundaries of the small area plans.

Approved development projects encompass approximately 1,267 acres of land within the town and the ETJ. An additional 718 acres of land remains within small area plans to be approved for development. This combined 1, 985 acres is susceptible to development within the next 10 years and may provide:

- Approximately 2,100 housing units
- Approximately an additional 5 million square feet of commercial development
- An undetermined additional amount of retail, since the majority of the small area plans did not calculate the amount of retail within each commercial development plan

In addition to the currently approved and planned development described above, the Town of Davidson permits by-right development according to designated zoning regulations. Assumptions were made to determine the approximate amount of land considered developable or redevelopable for the purposes of projections in the comprehensive plan. These assumptions include:

- Properties larger than 2 acres, OR
- Properties that do not currently contain a residential structure, and are NOT:
 - County or town owned
 - Protected by permanent conservation easements
 - Davidson College owned
 - A public right-of-way
 - Included in an approved development master plan

CURRENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK POTENTIAL: Considering these assumptions, developable or redevelopable properties may generate the following additional amounts and types of development beyond the approved developments and small area plan development:

- Approximately 2,950 new housing units
- Approximately 4 million square feet of commercial development

All together, approved, planned and permitted development could potentially generate the following total development amounts, in addition to the existing development in the town:

- A total of approximately 5,060 additional housing units
- A total of approximately 9 million additional square feet of commercial development



PROJECTED DEMAND FOR GROWTH: REGIONAL FORECASTS

For the purposes of this plan, demand for household and commercial growth in the Town of Davidson has been projected based on historic and regional population growth trends as well as an interest in achieving a realistic jobs-to-housing balance. Economic projections indicate that the town could absorb approximately 2,000 to 5,000 new households; and 2 to 4 million square feet of new commercial uses, including 400,000 to 800,000 square feet of new retail uses by 2030. Comparing the 20-year regional

growth forecasts for potential demand to the potential build-out supply of growth under the current planning framework, the town would easily exceed these 20-year projections. Therefore, the town has provided for excess growth capacity under its current plans and regulations.

“Comparing the 20-year regional growth forecasts for potential demand to the potential build-out supply of growth under the Current Planning Framework, the town would easily exceed these 20-year projections. Therefore, the town has provided for excess growth capacity under its current plans and regulations.”

STUDY AREAS

Study groups focused on seven topic areas: community character, community development, economic development, environmental sustainability, growth management, local governance, and mobility. These subjects were intentionally designed to be interdisciplinary and interdependent, so the Comprehensive Plan would benefit from multiple perspectives and a variety of local experts. Current conditions are described according to the town’s or region’s strengths (Assets), guiding principles and regulations (Applicable Initiatives and Plans), Current Policies, and Stakeholders most directly involved. Opportunities and challenges discovered during the current conditions assessment and study group discussions summarized according to the Livability Themes.

Community Character

Each community has a unique character. Davidson’s unique character is dependent upon it being a small historic college town. Some of the topics that were discussed by the Community Character study group included:

- Historic preservation
- Davidson College
- Gathering places
- Downtown commercial district
- Neighborhood-oriented development
- Quality design
- Public art

DAVIDSON’S ASSETS

- Intact historic buildings and landscapes
- Walkable and bike-friendly streets and trail network
- Well-used public spaces
- Active community interest and commitment



- A wealth of natural resources
- On-going public art program
- Strong urban design guidelines

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 1995 Land Plan
- 1997 Town Center Plan
- 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance
- 2009 -- Davidson Historic District listed on the National Register for Historic Places
- 2009 -- Member of the North Carolina Main Street program

CURRENT POLICIES

- Design review for locally designated historic resources and all non-residential buildings
- Active citizen participation in town planning and decision-making encouraged
- Funding and support for public events

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
- Davidson Design Review Board
- Davidson Planning Board
- Public Arts Commission
- Davidson Historical Society
- Downtown Davidson
- NC Main Street Program
- Davidson College

Economic Development

Economic growth is important because it supports the community by providing financial resources for public services, infrastructure and community facilities; jobs for residents; and balanced tax rates. The Economic Development study group described an “economically balanced growth model that supports and sustains the image of Davidson as a small college town.” The group discussed the following ways to accomplish this vision:

- Define metrics of economic success
- Locate commercial development in mixed use setting
- Continue regional partnerships
- Market opportunities for new industries
- Monitor local trends in job growth
- Capitalize on unique local assets

DAVIDSON’S ASSETS

- Small town character and excellent quality of life
- Davidson College



CHAPTER 2 - CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

- Proximity to Charlotte and international airport
- High percentage of well-educated, skilled residents
- Lowe's and Ingersoll Rand corporate campuses
- Excellent local schools
- Stable residential neighborhoods
- Successful retirement and senior communities
- Available small and large office space

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 2002 Leak-Goforth Economic Development Strategy
- 2003 Hyett Palma Downtown Retail Study
- 2006 Lake Norman/UNC Charlotte Urban Institute Fiscal Constraints Analysis
- Exit 30 office and retail development master plan
- 2009 Duke Energy Site Readiness Program
- 2010 Strategic Marketing and Development Plan

CURRENT POLICIES

- Regional economic development strategy
- Staff commitment to recruiting and sustaining small business
- Municipal Service District providing special events and amenities

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Lake Norman Economic Development Corporation
- Visit Lake Norman
- Downtown Davidson
- Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce
- Davidson College
- Major employers
- Small business owners

Environmental Sustainability

Sustainability is achieved when environmental, economic and social needs are all met without sacrificing important resources for future generations. Therefore, the threads of sustainability are found across all aspects of life. The Environmental Sustainability study group defined the following eight areas of interest:

- Energy and energy efficiency
- Food and agriculture
- Green building and development
- Open space and habitat
- Pollution (air/noise/light/water)
- Transportation and fleets
- Waste management
- Water and wastewater



DAVIDSON'S ASSETS

- Substantial rural landscape surrounding town limits
- Hundreds of acres of town-owned parks
- Sustainable-minded citizenry
- Regional agricultural heritage
- Davidson Farmer's Market
- Davidson College's strong commitment to environmental stewardship
- Environmental policy support from Mecklenburg County

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 1995 Land Plan
- 2001 Open Space Plan
- 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance
- 2008 Natural Assets Stakeholder Committee Report
- 2009 Energy Plan

CURRENT POLICIES

- Modified road standards to conserve land
- Tree preservation policies
- Stormwater management and erosion control standards
- Clustered subdivision policies for the rural area
- Stream and lakeshore buffer, floodplain, and critical watershed requirements
- Required open space set aside in the rural planning area

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Davidson Lands Conservancy
- Davidson Natural Assets and Tree Advisory Board
- Davidson Farmer's Market
- Davidson College
- Mecklenburg County
- Homeowners associations
- Developers and property owners
- Utility Providers

Community Development

Community development is a broad set of qualities and issues around which neighborhoods, population groups and other communities organize. The Community Development study group said Davidson should include "creative and sustainable opportunities and spaces that promote relationships and true community." Topics discussed by this group included:

- Affordable housing
- Education
- Arts
- Citizen leadership



CHAPTER 2 - CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

- Communications
- Community building
- Sense of place

DAVIDSON'S ASSETS

- Aging-in-Place Task Force
- Read Davidson
- Davidson Walks & Rolls
- Davidson Community Players
- Davidson Farmer's Market
- Community events and celebrations
- Community appreciation for schools, rural areas, and downtown businesses
- Public art support
- Strong volunteer base

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 1993 General Plan
- 1995 Land Plan
- 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance
- 2007 West Davidson Stakeholder Committee Report
- 2007 Plan for Public Art

CURRENT POLICIES

- Inclusionary housing ordinance
- Affordable housing design guidelines
- Allocation of portion of Occupancy Tax toward public art projects
- Staff dedication to organizing various community initiatives and public events
- Staff facilitation for several advisory committees

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Town of Davidson Affordable Housing Committee
- Davidson Housing Coalition
- Our Towns Habitat for Humanity
- The Pines community
- Aging-in-Place Task Force
- Local churches
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
- Private and charter schools in area
- Bookclubs, library patrons, and local bookstores
- Local advisory boards
- Davidson Public Art Commission
- Ada Jenkins Center



Local Government

The types and quality of public services the Town of Davidson will change with respect to population growth and comprehensive plan goals. Town government should remain flexible, responsive, efficient, and sustainable in the ways it manages and allocates resources, staffing, and partnerships to provide these services. The Local Government study group discussed the following:

- Financing and budgeting
- Staffing needs
- Local and other public services provided
- Citizen advisory boards and regional membership
- Non-governmental service providers

DAVIDSON'S ASSETS

- Excellent public facilities and services
- Nationally-recognized land use planning
- Well-supported volunteer fire department
- Well-trained and nationally accredited police department
- Five public and private schools within the town and ETJ limits
- Engaging recreation programming
- Well-qualified personnel in administrative positions
- Many town-maintained parks and roads
- Jointly owned MI-Connection by Davidson and Mooresville

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 1995 Land Plan
- 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance
- Annual Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Budget
- 2008 Staffing Study for the Town of Davidson
- 2009 Davidson Fire Department Strategic Operating Plan
- 2007 MI-Connection interlocal agreement between Mooresville, Davidson and Cornelius

CURRENT POLICIES

- Town authorization to prohibit proposed sewer infrastructure extensions
- Ability to annex without infrastructure in place
- No formal annexation plan or agreement with Iredell County
- Sphere of Influence agreements with other jurisdictions in Mecklenburg County

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Town of Mooresville
- Davidson Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities (CMU)
- Duke Energy & Energy United
- MI-Connection



CHAPTER 2 - CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

- PSNC (natural gas)
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)
- Davidson private and charter schools
- Mecklenburg County – Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA)
- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- Republic Waste
- Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Department
- Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal Office
- Charlotte Fire Department
- Mecklenburg County Emergency Management Office
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department
- Regional advocacy groups and recreation clubs
- Criminal Justice Advisory Group
- Mecklenburg County Law Enforcement Executives
- North Carolina Police Chiefs Association

Growth Management

The comprehensive plan must describe a vision for the growth of the community, including its physical extents, intensities and timing of development and related infrastructure improvements. The Growth Management study group evaluated the following as they discussed where and how the town should grow:

- Legal framework for land use planning
- Town ordinances and policies
- Regional issues
- Growth projections

DAVIDSON'S ASSETS

- Davidson College
- Growing interest in redeveloping downtown Davidson
- Griffith Street improvements
- Walkable and desirable residential areas in town
- Strong commitment by citizens to preserve rural land
- Smart-growth development practices
- Pending commuter rail line

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 1993 General Plan
- 1995 Land Plan
- 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance and amendments
- Various small area plans and corridor studies
- 2001 Wastewater Systems in Davidson report

CURRENT POLICIES

- Recommendations for mixed-use development in all planning areas



- Interest in redevelopment in the Village Center Planning Area
- Support for preserving existing housing and historic commercial buildings
- Open space preservation requirements in the Rural Planning Area

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Neighboring jurisdictions
- Davidson Planning Board
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities
- Mecklenburg County – Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA)

Mobility

The Mobility study group said the comprehensive plan must “provide a transportation network that is consistent with the land-use context, safe and efficient for all types of users, meets basic regional needs, and bears minimal impact on the natural environment.” Facilities in the network that were discussed included:

- Transit (both local and regional services)
- Bicycle accommodations
- Pedestrian accommodations
- Greenways
- Trails
- Roads and streets
- Norfolk Southern rail line

DAVIDSON’S ASSETS

- North-south regional access to Charlotte via Interstate 77
- Primary north-south connection to Charlotte via NC-115
- Regional east-west access via NC-73 and Bailey Road
- Regionally-significant new roads and improvements planned adjacent to town borders
- Greenways, bike lanes, trails and side paths
- Rural roads attracting recreational cyclists
- Crosswalks within close proximity of the downtown and college
- Robust traffic calming policies
- Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) bus services
- Proposed North Corridor commuter rail line
- Strong recreation clubs in area (cyclists, canoes, kayaks, runners, etc)

APPLICABLE INITIATIVES AND PLANS

- 2000 Davidson Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- 2002 Griffith Street Corridor Study
- 2003 Circulation Plan
- 2004 Connectivity and Traffic Calming Plan
- 2005 Davidson Transit Station Small Area Plan
- 2008 Bicycle Transportation Plan



CHAPTER 2 - CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

CURRENT POLICIES

- Requirement for complete streets in all new developments
- Provision of a variety of bicycle facilities for a range of skill levels and roadway conditions
- Decision-making process for installing traffic-calming devices
- Support for transit-oriented development
- Half of town police officers are accredited to patrol on bikes
- Police officers enforce speed limits to protect pedestrian safety
- Staff support for Davidson Walks and Rolls (Safe Routes to School program)

STAKEHOLDERS

- Town of Davidson
- Davidson Greenways, Trails and Bikeways Advisory Board
- Davidson Walks and Rolls
- Surrounding jurisdictions
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO)
- MUMPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)
- The Lake Norman Transportation Commission
- NC 73 Council of Planning
- Charlotte Area Transit System
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES

Following multiple study group discussions, interviews with local and regional stakeholders, and data analysis by the consulting team, a number of issues emerged for consideration in the comprehensive plan. When these challenges and opportunities were reduced to the most basic and common needs, the Livability Themes emerged. Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss these issues and concerns in more detail.

CREATE DIVERSE BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES *in response to...*

- No collective strategy for increasing local economic growth
- Much of the town's potential spending power is "leaking" outside Davidson's boundaries
- Lack of in-town job opportunities, especially for low-income residents
- Relatively homogenous job types and industries
- Well-suited to capture professional business/technical services market
- Limited water and sewer utility availability in south Iredell County
- No single-use commercial or light industrial planning areas
- Insufficient amount of office, retail, lodging, residential and entertainment venues in downtown to attract regional tourism market and diverse population
- Limited number of office sites, especially in downtown, for mid-sized employers

SUPPORT SAFE AND VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS *in response to...*

- Limited funding sources for public art and landscape enhancements
- Strong interest in strengthening the downtown core as the heart of Davidson



- Growing interest in public art
- Increasing inventory of undeveloped town or county owned properties
- Strong support for community policing and home security check programs
- Lack of public community and neighborhood gathering spaces

PROMOTE CULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMIC AND AGE DIVERSITY *in response to...*

- Shrinking or insufficient affordable housing stock, especially rental units
- Few alternative housing sites available
- Decreasing racial diversity
- Strong family connections within African-American communities
- More consideration for aging population, including design of housing and transportation amenities

ENCOURAGE COMMITTED CIVIC INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY *in response to...*

- Improving college-town relationship
- Heavily involved citizenry, especially long-time residents, in local government decision-making
- Highly educated residents
- Increasing availability of volunteers
- Strong support for the Ada Jenkins Center
- Popular regional events
- Commitment to “open government” and good public communication

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY CHOICES FOR TRANSPORTATION, FOOD AND ENERGY USE *in response to...*

- Vast majority of town residents drive to work for an average of 25 minutes
- Regional interest in expanding Interstate 77
- Strong local commitment to street connectivity
- Conflicts between increasing demand for new rural roads and desired rural viewshed protection
- No planning document that specifically addresses pedestrian accessibility and safety
- Misinformation about and hostility toward regarding pedestrian, cyclist and motorist rights
- Insufficient parking downtown for business and future transit
- Unclear gateways to town and visual cues informing motorists to yield to pedestrians and cyclists
- Conflict between increasing congestion along I-77 and NC 115 and desired pedestrian-friendly downtown
- Insufficient local, state and federal funding for transportation needs
- Building interest in energy efficiency and green development
- Grassroots leadership in community gardening
- Strong support for Davidson Farmers Market and local farming industry
- Relatively health-conscious population
- Multiple cycling, running and sports-recreation clubs and organizations
- Interest in making streets and public spaces senior-friendly and accessible

ENABLE FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES *in response to...*

- Vast natural resources and agricultural land in rural area
- Discontinuous preserved open space areas



CHAPTER 2 - CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONCERNS

- No clear plan for open space preservation and management
- Commitment to preserving lakeshore habitats and public access to shoreline
- Continuing regional air quality concerns
- Inadequate tree preservation ordinance enabling legislation
- Interest in preserving the town's historic fabric
- Concern that future growth is altering Davidson's historic character
- Significant pressure on local farmers to develop property
- Inaccurate and insufficient environmental inventory submittals prior to development
- Private deed restrictions can cause obstacles to effective environmental management
- Lack of wetland buffer requirements

CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES *in response to...*

- Good working relationships with Mecklenburg County for environmental regulation, emergency management, parks and recreation, law enforcement, and water/wastewater utilities
- General resident satisfaction in quality of local services
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation recently awarded to Davidson Police Department
- Lack of north Mecklenburg County magistrate services or courts
- Relatively high taxes and property values
- Imbalance between commercial and residential tax base
- No town staff succession plans
- Growing demand for new and increased public services and staffing
- No clear method for prioritizing local transportation improvements
- Immediate need for a second fire station to serve residential growth
- Insufficient space in town hall for storage, employee work space, and meeting space
- Decentralized parks and recreation programs and activities
- Misaligned Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) policies locate schools in non-pedestrian and non-bicycle friendly environments
- Perceived demand for additional and more diverse recreation programs
- Over \$107 million worth of capital projects the town would like to see built over the next 30 years

MAINTAIN QUALITY DESIGN AND SOUND PLANNING PRINCIPLES *in response to...*

- No annexation agreements between Davidson and Mooresville
- Restriction against extending rural sewer lines has limited rural residential growth
- Low-density residential development potential in the rural area
- Conflict between demands for moderate density infill development and preservation of downtown character
- Possible competition between downtown and Exit 30
- Inconsistent design standards between franchise and corporate prototypes and context sensitive design
- Perception that development approval process is inefficient
- Strong commitment to design review

Chapter 3



GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS



“Davidson’s economic health is essential to its remaining a sustainable community, so town government will judiciously encourage and guide the location of new business opportunities.”

-Town of Davidson Core Value

Chapter 3



GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to accomplish the livability goals established by the Comprehensive Plan, a clearly defined blueprint for future growth is needed – one that can preserve Davidson’s positive qualities while, at the same time, move toward achieving a truly livable community that supports all of the goals contained within the Livability Themes.

Each Livability Theme is described by a vision, series of goals, and initial recommendations for action. The Vision is a possible characterization of the town’s future for each theme. Goals provide an outcome that should be measured and achieved. The goals are further described according to two horizons of implementation and types of recommendations: short-term recommendations and ongoing initiatives. From the time of plan adoption until about 2020, the community will strive to implement the “Short Term Recommendations.” From adoption until build-out (estimated at 2040), the community will begin and continue to work on “Ongoing Initiatives.”

These recommendations are initial lists of action steps and should be expanded or amended as the plan is carried out by residents, elected officials and staff. Strategic recommendations will be defined through the implementation process outlined in Chapter 1. Therefore, the Board of Commissioners has not adopted the recommendations as provided in the Comprehensive Plan. In cases where goals or recommendations are already in progress, the Comprehensive Plan encourages local leaders to stay the course. Neither the Livability Themes, goals nor the recommendations are listed in any priority order.

CREATE DIVERSE BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Vision

Davidson’s strengths are its excellent quality of life, small town character, and skilled workforce. Davidson will become known for welcoming and supporting entrepreneurs and other small business owners. Many of these small businesses will become major employers, Fortune 500 companies, and influential philanthropists. The town will also become a premier regional destination for food connoisseurs, art lovers, and outdoor enthusiasts. The town will become a center of applied research and conventions for those in the public health, education and community planning fields. Davidson’s major industries will be in professional services, independent and specialty retail, and sustainable technology.

GOAL 1: Encourage Small and Independent Businesses

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should spend the first five years studying small and independent business trends, supporting existing small businesses, and promoting the downtown as an ideal place for new small businesses. As vacancies are being filled in the historic sections of downtown, the town and the local business community should expand opportunities for small business growth within walking distance of the transit station.

- Create a retail advertising campaign to emphasize local businesses -- “Shop Davidson”
- Inventory existing small and in-home businesses
- Consider providing mini-grants or loans to encourage small businesses
- Maintain a database of vacant office or retail space throughout the town for marketing

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The downtown should continue to serve as the main incubator for small and independent businesses of varying types and sizes. Former start-up businesses will look for larger space as they grow. Town staff and local realtors should help small business owners find larger retail or office space in other commercial centers in Davidson.

- Encourage independent and/or specialty retail in downtown and the Exit 30 area
- Assist in the formation of small business cooperative for shared office support services
- Market local small business success stories



CHAPTER 3 - GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide more meeting and office space for small businesses
- Encourage owners of growing businesses to mentor emerging small businesses
- Create a program to champion small business town-wide

GOAL 2: Encourage Economic Growth that Supports Local Assets and Policies

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should spend the first five years refining its economic development strategies, incentive options and zoning regulations. The local business community and regional economic development partners should focus marketing strategies on the downtown area. As the commuter rail line and station is constructed, the town will likely experience sudden and intense redevelopment near the downtown. New businesses should support commuter, resident and business needs. Significant public infrastructure and transportation investments will be required in the downtown area.

- Establish regular meetings between town staff and local realtors to discuss business vacancies
- Provide a more streamlined development approval process for businesses
- Create and implement specific economic goals as described in a strategic economic development plan
- License existing and future businesses to collect baseline employment information
- Create an economic development advisory committee to assist staff decisions
- Create a staff position to oversee economic development throughout the town
- Rezone properties along NC 73 and north of Griffith Street to Employment Center (EC) Planning Area
- Prioritize transportation and enhancement projects in the transit station area
- Implement a special tax district (Tax Increment Financing or Special Assessment District) to finance projects in the downtown and transit area

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The downtown should be promoted as a regional tourism destination. Greenfield mixed use or commercial centers, north of downtown and along NC 73, will continue to build-out. Davidson will be well positioned to support businesses of all sizes and industry types. Economic development should provide a full range of local employment opportunities for residents.

- Aggressively promote the downtown as a destination and employment center
- Develop an artist incubator center in the downtown area
- Integrate events and marketing for both downtown and Exit 30 area
- Research, implement and monitor models and metrics of economic development
- Promote college-oriented and college-owned businesses downtown
- Continue to support the Main Street program
- Support and expand hotel and conferencing capabilities
- Acquire or gain control of land for economic development
- Provide sewer to the areas north of town to enable mixed use development
- Promote Davidson as the premier cycling and outdoor recreation destination
- Promote Davidson's historic resources and Davidson College as a regional destination
- Promote local farms and food markets as agri-tourism
- Market the town's character, identity and quality of life to corporate executives
- Encourage Davidson College alumni to open businesses in Davidson

GOAL 3: Attract Emerging and Sustainable Industries

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Davidson should work with regional, state and federal agencies to create "green jobs" through new incentives and policies. The town should also prepare for future



industries by starting small with pilot projects, new policies, incubators and marketing.

- Market Davidson as a model for K-12 education, civic involvement, and active living
- Initiate the Fit Davidson pilot program and consider a similar town-wide implementation
- Adopt economic incentives and land use policies that encourage agricultural use of farmland
- Research incentives for energy-efficient businesses

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As economic opportunities in Davidson increase, the residential population will become diverse and require a variety of employment choices. The town should encourage business owners to be strong community partners and environmental stewards. New employment centers will build on sites along major highways.

- Support local incubators focusing on energy-efficient businesses
- Provide jobs for a variety of skill-sets, including disabled persons and low-income residents
- Research ways for businesses to sell by-products as raw materials to other local employers
- Connect businesses with adjacent neighborhoods
- Develop the NC 73 corridor as a green, light industrial/office center
- Recruit bio-technology, medical, and social research firms

SUPPORT SAFE AND VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The Vision

“Eyes on the street” and lively community gathering spaces provide safe places for children, pedestrians, and visitors. The town and private developers should continue to design, build, and manage public spaces (such as streets, greenways, parks, civic buildings, and commercial centers) that allow people of all ages and abilities to interact, create, and learn.

GOAL 1: Maintain the Downtown as a High-Quality Pedestrian Environment and Civic Center

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Staff and officials should plan for an outstanding pedestrian environment in the downtown, transit, and Exit 30 areas. Town staff should develop strategies to maximize the efficiency of parking in the downtown area, possibly requiring a new parking deck. Additional wayfinding signage and maps should indicate bike and walking routes to local and regional destinations.

- Create a downtown parking plan for motor vehicles and bicycles
- Prepare necessary construction documents for new parking and mobility infrastructure projects downtown
- Consider adding parking levels of service to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance
- Add signage for the Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan and the Carolina Thread Trail
- Add additional wayfinding signage in the downtown area to local destinations
- Require that new mixed use developments reserve areas for civic uses
- Train all police officers in bicycle patrol and crowd management techniques

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The town and residents should work with civic organizations to ensure their continued success in downtown and other neighborhood centers. The downtown should be well connected to other regional destinations via multi-use paths and transit. Police should monitor public safety in the downtown as night life becomes more active.

- Keep post offices within major neighborhood centers and/or downtown
- Build new connections, traffic management systems, improved intersections, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements near the transit station



CHAPTER 3 - GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand public, free wi-fi capabilities in the village center and other public gathering spaces
- Continue to require human-scale, pedestrian-friendly architecture, brick sidewalks, attractive lamp posts and welcoming store fronts
- Increase street presence and activity of law enforcement
- Build the Carolina Thread Trail and Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan improvements
- Support local outdoor recreation and cycling events

GOAL 2: Encourage New Public Art Placement and Gateway Signage

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town's identity should be promoted for the benefit of visitors, new residents and relationships with regional stakeholders. Recommendations from small area and marketing plans should be referenced as the town promotes its quality of life and community character.

- Mark entries into the town with clear signage, landscaping, or other gateway features
- Erect signage celebrating special town recognitions
- Improve signage for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities

ONGOING INITIATIVES: New amenities such as public art, play equipment, and landscaping will energize existing transportation corridors, the transit station area, and park properties. The town should look to local and regional artists, historic architecture, and innovative landscape design for inspiration. New developments should embrace public art and clear signage. The rural viewshed, pockets of in-town open space, and greenway corridors should be enhanced with appropriate landscaping, public art and signage.

- Encourage college-oriented art in public spaces and local arts events
- Work with local donors and grant organizations to implement the public art plan
- Ensure that public art is funded through local tax revenue
- Encourage art that promotes Davidson's history and architecture
- Provide venues to display Davidson College student and faculty sculpture exhibits off campus
- Fund public art projects near the transit station, in local parks, and along pedestrian walkways
- Implement the Griffith Street landscape plan
- Implement sustainable landscape management techniques along greenways and rural roads

GOAL 3: Provide Safe and Secure Neighborhoods, Streets, Parks and Greenways

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Local police officers and other town staff should focus on public education and enforcement initiatives to establish an environment where motorists, cyclists and pedestrians are expected to exercise caution and courtesy while sharing the roads. Planners should focus their efforts on identifying and prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects for future funding and revising design policies to ensure that all user groups can safely use local streets. Local and county agencies should continue to acquire land for future parks and greenways, and apply for grants to improve existing park facilities.

- Prioritize public traffic calming projects
- Conduct an inventory of informal trails in the town and ETJ and incorporate into public network
- Educate the public about the "rules of the road" for all users
- Create a bicycle and greenways network map
- Create a pedestrian access and mobility plan
- Clearly define greenways as off-road multi-use paths in the planning ordinance
- Improve crosswalk and lane marking visibility
- Establish Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines



- Consider traffic access management policies such as limited driveways along major roads
- Consider revisions to guidelines to provide more senior-friendly streetscapes and public spaces
- Limit driveway curb cuts along major roads and bike paths
- Evaluate existing land use context, safety concerns and speed limits on all state and local streets

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Additional residential and commercial development will bring more visitors and residents, and the town should work diligently to build safer streets, parks and greenways. The town should ensure that proper bike and pedestrian facility design is considered during any resurfacing, restriping, or road repair projects. Neighborhood organizations should emphasize public safety by hosting outdoor social events and implementing creative traffic calming along busy streets. Police officers will become partners with neighborhood organizations to be more proactive in crime prevention. The town should also continue to maintain bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

- Build sidewalks, especially where gaps exist
- Continue to promote bicycle, pedestrian, and bus travel to local schools with necessary support and amenities, such as bike racks and crossing guards
- Build off-road greenways, trails, and bike improvement projects per the bicycle master plan
- Fund traffic calming and street connectivity projects
- Establish regular cleaning and maintenance policies for bicycle facilities, sidewalks, greenways and streets
- Plan and construct intersection improvements to provide safer and less congested regional travel
- Create safe environments where parents and youth can safely exercise independence
- Establish community responsibility for children’s safety
- Improve Fisher Farm’s visibility as a regional destination

GOAL 4: Provide Diverse Public Park Amenities

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Parks should include the most innovative, sustainable and accessible park design features and amenities. Residents and elected officials need to balance active and passive recreational needs by considering growth pressure, impacts on the natural environment, and the increasingly diverse population. Policies should be developed for residents to become active participants in the design and improvement of publicly-owned properties.

- Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Update definitions of various park-types to require appropriate types of seating, trash receptacles, bike racks, lighting, public art, and landscaping
- Promote building community and urban gardens on public properties
- Incorporate community gardens in neighborhood/community park requirements
- Establish more shared facility/ball field agreements with private owners and schools

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Well designed public gathering spaces and park facilities should be constructed, with priority given to the the downtown followed by outlying neighborhoods and developments. Park designs should respond to resident needs, informed by community surveys and demographic analysis. The management of public properties should also respond to the surrounding land use context and environmental concerns. As a variety of park facilities and recreation programs are established, Davidson will become a popular regional destination for ecologists and educators, outdoor enthusiasts, and sports competitors. The town should consider ways to maximize the economic opportunities of tourism while balancing that with the needs of local residents. Environmental advocates and youth clubs should embrace their role as stewards of natural parks by educating the public about natural resources, providing recreational programs and helping to maintain the facilities.



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- Preserve in-town green spaces and corridors ideal for recreational play and neighborhood gathering spaces
- Ensure that every resident (within incorporated areas) is within 1/4 mile of a public park and greenway access
- Create more nature preserves
- Balance active and passive parks and amenities
- Build multi-generational parks
- Build parks and community facilities that provide opportunities for local youth (middle and high school students)
- Provide more unstructured play or gathering spaces, especially in underserved neighborhoods
- Maintain Fisher Farm as a natural area with low impact park amenities
- Create learning laboratories for local students and residents at nature preserves
- Establish an Adopt a Park and/or Adopt a Greenway program
- Establish a regular volunteer maintenance schedule for local trails and neighborhood gathering spaces
- Restore impaired streams, wetlands or natural habitat areas
- Permit limited commercial uses in major recreational centers
- Maintain access and safety of local connections between neighborhoods and local parks

PROMOTE CULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMIC AND AGE DIVERSITY

The Vision

The Town of Davidson was one of the first municipalities in the nation to require affordable housing in new development because the town believes diversity is key to the survival of Davidson's small town character, economy, and quality of life. The town should focus on ways to increase socioeconomic diversity and small business opportunities.

GOAL 1: Encourage Development and Activities that Attract a Variety of Age Groups

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should require housing and commercial development appropriate for occupants of all ages and abilities. Davidson should be promoted as an ideal place for entrepreneurs, minorities and new graduates to start or relocate their businesses. The town should also celebrate and fully support the needs of teenagers and young adults.

- Amend ordinances to permit co-housing, cottage housing, and other housing alternatives
- Require universal design specifications as a percentage of total housing units in future developments
- Distribute materials to recent Davidson College graduates and alumni promoting Davidson's quality of life and business opportunities
- Provide more recreational programs and opportunities that are directed at teens, young adults, and young professionals
- Continue to support and promote youth team sports, scout troops, and other youth activities
- Develop public safety programs aimed at protecting teenagers and young adults
- Include aging-in-place responsibilities as part of a town staff position
- Evaluate policies and ordinances based on their effects to the senior population

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Developers and town staff should encourage young professionals to move into Davidson's new mixed use centers. Meanwhile, the town should expect more retirees and senior residents to increase the average age of the population. The population at build-out will be less dependent on local services such as schools and lawn care. Older residents should be active in local politics, volunteer organizations, and business leadership.



- Encourage retail businesses and entertainment venues that attract young professionals and families
- Create an artists in-residence program
- Educate the public about the benefits of age diversity
- Establish a mentoring program where senior business experts provide advice and financial support to young business leaders
- Increase lifelong educational opportunities
- Develop flexible and affordable senior housing

GOAL 2: Provide a Full Range of Services and Opportunities for All Socioeconomic Groups

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should continue requiring affordable housing in all new residential developments and research ways to maintain affordability of older homes near the downtown. Town staff and advocates should also continue to promote the benefits of socioeconomic diversity.

- Clarify the roles and eligibility process of the Davidson Housing Coalition and the town’s affordable housing program
- Provide free or low-cost personal finance classes
- Evaluate the need for a local urgent care center and expanded health care facilities

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Recognizing that many of Davidson’s residents will continue to commute to work, affordable housing within close proximity of the transit station will be critical to quality of life and the success of commuter rail. Additional programs should also be established to support low to moderate income families for non-housing needs. Public transit should connect low and moderate income families to all major neighborhood, civic and commercial centers.

- Prevent net loss in the number of existing affordable houses and neighborhoods
- Market affordable housing opportunities to teachers and other service providers
- Collaborate with Davidson College to improve relationships between off-campus student residents and neighboring residents
- Promote rental and high-density affordable housing
- Locate affordable housing throughout the community
- Work with local farmers and markets to provide healthy food choices for all economic groups
- Encourage cooperatives for food, childcare and housing

GOAL 3: Increase Racial Diversity in the Town

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Davidson’s African-American community and rich cultural heritage should be promoted to encourage individuals of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds to move to or remain in the town. Long-time residents should be encouraged to lead this effort by developing relationships with local youth and newcomers.

- Identify and provide services and activities that support minorities of all ages and income levels
- Create a mentoring program for local youth, especially minorities
- Encourage minority-oriented performers and vendors to participate at town-sponsored events

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Local leaders should promote diversity and inclusiveness throughout all neighborhoods, businesses and organizations. The town should recruit more local businesses and entertainment services oriented toward a range of minority and socioeconomic groups.

- Encourage minority-owned and minority-oriented businesses
- Identify small business opportunities that serve minority communities
- Promote Davidson as a venue for regional minority artists
- Encourage young residents of various races to pursue civic leadership roles



CHAPTER 3 - GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

ENCOURAGE COMMITTED CIVIC INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Vision

Davidson is well-known for its involved citizenry. Current leaders and volunteers should find and guide the next generation of activists to sustain this level of involvement in local government, social services, and environmental stewardship. The community will rely on the financial generosity of citizens, non-profit organizations, and local government. The town, Davidson College, local schools, and community organizations must organize volunteers, manage donations, and describe plans for how gifts will be used to further the goals of the comprehensive plan.

GOAL 1: Build Relationships with and among the Various Public and Private Schools

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Davidson has attracted a number and variety of schools. The community should continue to expand high quality educational opportunities for youth of all ages, pre-school to post-secondary. Elected officials should lead the way in supporting collaboration and communication between local schools.

- Evaluate local ordinances regarding school facilities
- Encourage principals of local public, private and charter schools to meet on a regular basis
- Encourage school principals to participate in Civics 101

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Local educators, retired educators, and local volunteers should create a consortium to share resources and develop a model for integrating community in schools. Significant growth in the student population will require construction of new schools. These schools should be integrated within neighborhoods and accessible by foot, bike and public transit.

- Work with CMS to reserve property for future public schools
- Ensure future schools remain within walking distance of neighborhoods
- Encourage residents to attend CMS North Learning Community meetings and stay involved in the public schools
- Create a volunteer clearinghouse of available classroom assistants, mentors, tutors, and test proctors
- Establish youth mentoring programs
- Maintain a wish list for donated goods and services for each school
- Encourage schools to share resources and volunteers
- Discourage dividing local public school students into different districts
- Continue to provide quality and accessible K-12 education
- Study projected elementary, middle and high school student growth and the implications to facility planning

GOAL 2: Sustain and Promote More Resident Volunteerism and Involvement

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Town staff should spend considerable time with residents of all ages and interests during public meetings. Local advisory boards should become more engaged and influential on short-term and long-term decisions. The town should consider ways to promote existing volunteer groups while promoting town-sponsored volunteer activities. Communication between neighborhoods, officials and town staff should continue to improve.

- Schedule most public planning events in the evenings or on weekends
- Increase student involvement in the planning process
- Encourage Davidson youth to report on events in the community
- Promote the town's volunteer programs and policies
- Create volunteer sidewalk/trail/bike facility maintenance policies



- Evaluate term limits and representation on advisory boards and committees
- Consider staggered and/or lengthened Board of Commissioner terms
- Periodically evaluate the functions of appointed volunteer boards and committees
- Create a neighborhood phone tree for disaster/emergency response
- Improve public signage including bulletin boards/kiosk booths and easy-to-read town event signage
- Avoid using terms such as “West Davidson” or “Townie” to refer to neighborhoods or residents
- Create a clearinghouse of volunteer contacts, skill sets, interests, availability, etc

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Neighborhood organizations should continue to form and become stronger advocates for good land development and other local government decisions. Academia and advocates for civic participation and leadership will come to Davidson to study new techniques. Neighborhood groups and community organizations should look for opportunities to partner with local government given the limited resources of local government.

- Continue “road shows” to neighborhoods
- Establish and develop neighborhood ambassadors or block captains
- Establish a welcome committee for new Davidson residents
- Continue and improve the Civics 101 program
- Sponsor community dinners or other events that support local identity
- Design local events, such as Town Day, to promote more local vendors and volunteerism

GOAL 3: Provide for More Interaction Between the Town and Davidson College

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The relationship between town and college officials has significantly improved over the past five years, and the college has more off-campus presence. Town officials and college staff should discuss ways to meet mutual goals of college plans and the comprehensive plan.

- Identify linkages between the Davidson College Strategic Plan and the comprehensive plan
- Encourage Davidson College students to serve on advisory boards and committees
- Distribute information to the community (i.e. Oak Row Report) and/or provide better signage for college events
- Encourage Davidson College to establish a staff contact for resident volunteers
- Provide regular internship opportunities for local college students

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Ties with Davidson College should continue to be strengthened by encouraging more volunteerism on and off-campus by both residents and students. The college and town should identify ways to partner and support local economic development initiatives and business growth. The town and the college should work together to promote mutual interests and jointly finance capital projects that benefit students and residents.

- Continue regular meetings between town and college staff
- Foster open communication between the college and town regarding future plans which affect the community
- Find ways for the town and college to jointly plan properties and services
- Encourage town citizens to support the college by volunteering on campus and attending campus events
- Encourage Davidson College to become an advocate for economic development and regional issues
- Identify capital projects for college-owned properties that benefit the community

GOAL 4: Improve Relationships Between Government, Non-Profit and Citizen-Led Grassroots Organizations



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SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should explain the goals of the Comprehensive Plan to local nonprofit organizations and other government agencies. Local government and community organization budgets should include funding to implement goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Assemble past and present advisory board members, advocacy groups and elected officials to discuss roles, strategies and funding opportunities related to the Comprehensive Plan
- Monitor charitable giving trends locally and regionally
- Continue to leverage private donations with public grants and in-kind support to implement public projects

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Citizens should be empowered to promote the goals of the comprehensive plan, including but limited to fundraising, recruiting business, and improving public spaces with public art and landscaping. Large-scale public art and corridor enhancement visions will be realized with a combination of public and private financial support.

- Maintain and support the public library and all public institutions
- Continue to support and provide technical assistance to advocacy and nonprofit organizations
- Establish a fund or organization to sponsor community projects or initiatives
- Support the establishment of other local advocacy and nonprofit organizations

GOAL 5: Provide Support and Space for Churches, Religious Institutions, Childcare Services, and Community Centers

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: As the population grows, there will likely be more demand for government, religious space, childcare, and recreation centers. The town should consider ways to accommodate public meetings and events in new government facility plans.

- Locate future government offices or police and fire stations in neighborhoods or mixed use settings
- Require space for community gathering or religious activities in all major developments
- Continue to recognize and support the community services provided by churches and other religious organizations
- Maintain good relationships between elected officials and religious leaders
- Evaluate availability of quality childcare options in Davidson

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Davidson should become an example for walkable, mixed use development integrating new church campuses, schools, and community centers within the overall land use context.

- Ensure that quality and affordable preschool, afterschool and childcare alternatives are available in the town or within close proximity
- Partner with local churches and non-governmental organizations to provide community services and meeting space
- Encourage churches to be physically integrated within the immediate neighborhood
- Plan for a significant community center within close proximity to downtown

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY CHOICES FOR TRANSPORTATION, FOOD AND ENERGY USE

The Vision

The lifestyles of individuals will produce far greater impact on air and water quality, road safety, and public health than local government initiatives could provide. Individuals must realize the personal benefits of these choices in order to form healthy habits. The town and local advocates for active living, energy efficiency, and public health should partner to make sustainable transportation, food and energy choices convenient, safe and fun.

GOAL 1: Encourage More Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel



SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: As the costs of owning and driving motor vehicles increase, residents will become more interested in walking and using bicycles for local trips. However, the majority of residents do not feel safe sharing the roads or know enough about local pedestrian or bicycle networks to make efficient use of them. Town staff and local pedestrian and cycling advocates should continue to educate residents about the benefits of cycling and walking.

- Initiate mentoring programs and demonstrations for alternative travel
- Provide bicycle storage, changing facilities, and increased bicycle parking
- Increase police use of bikes, and add segways to town vehicle inventory
- Install more bike racks and walkways downtown, in commercial and civic centers
- Support local cycling clubs, retailers and cycling advocates
- Sign bicycle and walking routes on low traffic neighborhood streets
- Improve signage on local greenways to identify distances and nearby destinations
- Post educational materials about active living to the town website

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Develop partnerships between the town, Davidson College, state agencies, health professionals, and residents will promote active lifestyle choices. Pilot programs, such as the Fit Davidson initiative, should be continued as a way to encourage the community to be more active and less dependent on motor vehicles.

- Continue to promote bicycle, pedestrian, and bus travel to local schools
- Help coordinate walking and running clubs
- Maintain safety for pedestrians and cyclists in high-traffic areas, such as downtown
- Continue to sponsor bike helmet fit clinics and bicycle safety rodeos
- Promote bicycle pedicabs for local events
- Create a shared bike program similar to Davidson College
- Plan for optimum bicycle and pedestrian access and safety near the transit station

GOAL 2: Promote Car Pooling, Vehicle Share Programs, and Public Transit as Viable Modes of Transportation

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Thousands of Davidson residents drive alone to work 25 miles or more each way, not unlike many residents from neighboring towns and counties. Davidson residents should be encouraged to take advantage of existing transit services and coordinate carpooling in order to reduce personal fuel and vehicle maintenance costs, reduce road congestion, and improve air quality. Local leaders and officials should continue working with regional partners to expedite commuter rail service to the north Mecklenburg County area.

- Create a transit rider orientation or mentoring program
- Adopt a local station area plan that includes easy access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Improve pedestrian facilities at current bus stops
- Work with regional leaders to expedite the construction of the North Corridor commuter line
- Establish land development incentives and policies to encourage higher densities near transit stations

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Mentoring and vehicle share programs should be established, and educational materials should describe tips for sustainable commuting options. Commuter rail will make it easier for more residents and employees to reduce their dependency on motor vehicles.

- Develop a vehicle share program
- Provide sufficient transit parking downtown
- Provide shuttle routes between the rail station area and other regional destinations



- Work with the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to maintain affordable public transportation

GOAL 3: Reduce Household and Corporate Waste

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: As residents become more interested in sustainable living, local government and environmental advocacy groups should work with residents and business owners and to reduce landfill waste. Increasing participation in recycling and promoting on-site composting are two initial steps to accomplish this goal.

- Promote historic preservation as a means to conserve building materials
- Offer reduced-priced compost bins at the farmers market
- Require recycling bins all residential, commercial and public buildings
- Promote on-site composting as an alternative to leaf collection

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As individual property owners and residents become more engaged in waste reduction programs, larger business-owners and new industries should be encouraged to reduce solid waste.

- Continue to work with Mecklenburg County to implement the recommendations in the Solid Waste Management Plan
- Create waste-to-energy loops between local and regional businesses
- Expand capacity for processing food waste through larger-scale composting
- Encourage use of recycled and recyclable products

GOAL 4: Reduce Individual and Corporate Energy Consumption and Promote Renewable Energy Production

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The Town of Davidson Energy Plan identified a number of short term steps that would help reduce the community's energy demand and encourage the production and use of renewable energy. The town's ordinances and policies are generally supportive of energy-efficient design, but additional education and incentive programs are needed to approach energy conservation comprehensively.

- Create a resource manual for sustainable energy use, fuel sources and solid waste disposal
- Conduct energy audits of government-owned buildings and equipment
- Encourage energy audits of private businesses
- Adopt a purchasing policy for vehicles, equipment, electronics, and supplies that emphasizes energy conservation
- Educate the the public about energy conservation and solid waste reduction measures
- Identify federal, state and local programs that reward energy reduction
- Support low income home energy assistance programs and weatherization programs
- Encourage home energy improvements with financial incentives and public education
- List available tax credits for green development and energy efficiency in town communications

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As the town refines its energy policies and development proposals, equal consideration should be placed on building energy efficiency as the arrangement of buildings and land uses. Local government, regional agencies, and large-scale industries should continue to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

- Work with the local building industry to develop energy efficient building construction standards
- Promote Energy Star, LEED or similar certification for new construction
- Support use of on-site energy generation technologies
- Target businesses interested in sustainable energy production



- Work with Davidson College to jointly fund and develop sustainable energy production sites or programs
- Require that all future town-owned buildings are energy efficient
- Research policies requiring solar access in developments

GOAL 5: Promote the Production of, Access to, and Consumption of Local Foods

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Davidson should focus on providing easy and affordable access to local or regional food sources. Open space within the town limits are opportunities for community gardening and sustainable land management. Land development policies should be evaluated for how well they support agriculture and food production.

- Establish partnerships with Davidson College, state agencies, and health professionals to encourage healthy lifestyle choices
- Encourage homeowners associations to create community gardens in common open space
- Encourage urban food production and pocket gardens on public property
- Inventory existing farms in the rural area
- Participate in food planning on state and regional level
- Define and permit appropriate agricultural uses in most planning areas
- Create a local food plan

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Davidson should consider ways to ensure the success of the Davidson Farmers Market and other local agricultural distribution networks. The Rural Planning Area should be promoted as a prime location for small to medium-sized working farms.

- Secure land for community farming in the rural area
- Encourage organic farming and animal husbandry in the Rural Planning Area and other undeveloped areas of the ETJ
- Encourage agricultural use of open space land in residential subdivisions
- Minimize negative ecological impacts of agricultural and food production activities
- Provide a permanent covered structure for the Davidson Farmer’s Market
- Consider establishing a food co-op, perhaps in conjunction with the Farmer’s Market
- Create financial assistance programs that make local food more affordable to low income residents
- Require new development proposals to assess impacts on surrounding active farms and protected open space

ENABLE FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC ASSETS

The Vision

The town has a strong reputation for open space preservation as part of the development process. Sustainable management plans are required for publicly owned or maintained properties, including parks, rights of way, and buildings. Similarly, individuals and neighborhoods should reevaluate how they manage their property.

GOAL 1: Protect and Create Meaningful Open Space

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: An open space plan should describe priority natural areas for preservation and enhancement. Policies should be reevaluated to preserve well-connected and quality habitats, significant farmland, and accessible park areas.

- Create a new Open Space Plan



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- Use the Natural Assets Inventory as a decision-making tool for open space preservation
- Reevaluate whether utility corridors count toward open space requirements
- Redefine open space requirements to prioritize preservation of sensitive habitats in development
- Evaluate public perceptions, definitions and value of various types of open space
- Redefine viewsheds to include a variety of spaces along public streets and greenways

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The Town of Davidson, Mecklenburg County, and local conservation organizations should allocate funding toward the purchase of open space property. However, it is anticipated that most open space will be acquired through development and conservation easements.

- Encourage the Davidson Lands Conservancy (DLC) to secure more conservation easements
- Create succession and management plans for protected property
- Protect migration corridors and preserve open space across property lines
- Identify significant natural open space in the downtown and Village Infill Planning Area
- Preserve most of the undeveloped rural area
- Work with neighboring jurisdictions to preserve contiguous and valuable open space
- Protect viewsheds along greenways and roads in rural area
- Recognize the evolutionary nature of open space
- Reward open space stewardship
- Continue to require open space preservation as part of development in the rural area
- Monitor and minimize development impacts on significant ecosystems

GOAL 2: Preserve Natural Habitats, the Lakeshore, and the Tree Canopy

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Town staff and local non-profit organizations should educate residents and property owners on water conservation, pruning techniques and native plant species. As the historic tree canopy in the downtown area ages, the town and residents should replant with native, hardwood species.

- Work toward designation as a Tree City USA
- Promote healthy pruning techniques
- Set measurable goals to increase and sustain the urban forest
- Consider using only native, drought-tolerant species in town landscaping projects
- Create a “tree bank” for developers and home-owners to mitigate for tree removal and provide funding for new replanting efforts
- Create a tree canopy replanting and management plan
- Allocate significant staff time to urban forestry activities
- Establish a small grant fund to assist low income property owners with removal or pruning of trees
- Revise open space or tree preservation requirements to better preserve existing tree canopy in all planning areas

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Several public access areas should be made available on Lake Davidson for canoes, swimming, and fishing. The Town of Davidson staff should employ more sustainable management practices of publicly owned open space. The Davidson Lands Conservancy should become a regional leader in sustainable management techniques.

- Require undisturbed upland buffers surrounding delineated wetlands
- Construct more off road greenways for habitat preservation
- Minimize development impacts on existing vegetation



- Promote native tree planting and prohibit invasive species
- Bury utility lines along all public streets
- Implement sustainable management practices on publicly owned open space
- Balance the need for roads with tree canopy protection
- Implement the Tree Inventory (2007) recommendations for urban canopy maintenance
- Use Lake Davidson as a teaching opportunity about water quality
- Protect the shorelines of Lake Davidson and Lake Cornelius
- Provide safe and public access on local lakes for swimming, canoeing and fishing
- Continue to monitor water quality in the lakes

GOAL 3: Sustain and Enhance Water and Air Quality

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Air and water are natural resources span jurisdictional boundaries, and are therefore regional issues. The town should continue to work with regional agencies to educate the public about the importance of air and water quality. Davidson residents could positively impact the natural environment by adopting their properties with water saving practices and reducing their motor vehicle miles travelled.

- Promote green roofs, green walls, and pervious pavements
- Encourage homeowners associations and residential property owners to employ sustainable landscaping and green household practices
- Create Know-Your-Watershed education programs
- Promote Adopt-a-Stream programs locally
- Work with Mecklenburg County to enforce rigorous water conservation measures
- Provide educational materials regarding sustainable landscape practices
- Encourage residents to install irrigation system rain sensors and other water conservation devices
- Create incentives to reduce hydrocarbon emissions by local businesses or institutions
- Educate residents about current and projected air quality conditions

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The town should plan restoration projects along waterways, considering new policies or models for reducing air pollutants, and design public properties and buildings to be water and energy efficient. Davidson should also continue to help the region obtain state and federal air quality standards.

- Protect groundwater and surface water
- Install demonstration water management projects on public properties
- Increase pervious surfaces in threatened or critical watersheds and sub basins
- Encourage rainwater capture and reuse in all new developments
- Make bulk purchases of rain barrels and other water management devices available at discount rates
- Monitor and mitigate sources of groundwater contamination
- Monitor hazardous waste sites, brownfield and former industrial sites
- Monitor air quality conditions near all K-12 schools and government buildings

GOAL 4: Protect Historic Downtown Buildings and Neighborhoods

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Local and regional preservation advocates should educate residents about the financial incentives of historic preservation. The town should also discuss any potential conflicts between historic preservation and downtown infill.

- Create a brochure to educate the public about the tax advantages of historic preservation



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- Improve the current development review processes and ordinances to preserve historic buildings and sites
- Consider establishing an additional or expanded local historic district to include residential areas
- Consider establishing Davidson as a Certified Local Government (CLG)
- Pursue legislation to allow the town to prevent demolition in rare cases
- Consider limiting building height to three stories along Main Street in the downtown business district

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As the downtown becomes better known as a retail and entertainment destination, visitors and residents will become more interested in local architecture and history. Historic preservation groups should work with the town to organize events celebrating local history.

- Promote the renovation of older buildings
- Participate in National History Month
- Communicate local history in a town hall display
- Organize regular lectures and walking tours regarding local history and historic sites
- Create a façade improvement program within the historic district
- Preserve the residential use of historic houses in the historic district

CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES

The Vision

The town has established itself as a leader in smart growth, recreation, education, and community-based policing. In order to sustain or improve the current level of public service as the population grows, the town must be strategic in financing new capital projects, operations, and staff positions. The town should consider ways to partner with Mecklenburg County, neighboring jurisdictions, and the private sector to provide services. The town will spend more resources on specialized local government functions such as transportation planning, economic development, public safety, design review, and civic involvement.

GOAL 1: Plan for New, Expanded or Relocated Public Facilities and Large-Scale Capital Projects

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The proposed fire station in the NC 73 area, a future community center, and a downtown parking deck will require significant capital expenses over the next five years. Town officials should evaluate the costs and benefits of these planned projects based on resident needs. Staff should prepare designs and construction documents for priority facilities.

- Establish a capital reserve
- Maintain a ten to twenty-year wish list of capital need and equipment rotation
- Require fiscal impact analysis studies for new large capital expenses and development projects
- Identify a location for and build a second fire station and satellite police office

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As the pace of development intensifies, private and public funding will be required to accommodate additional traffic, civic space, recreational programs, and public service demands. The town will need to leverage local funding with grant sources to help finance new capital projects.

- Continue to provide centralized government services
- Compare financing and design requirements for renovating the existing town hall versus new construction
- Locate essential public services in the Davidson-Concord/NC 73 area concurrent to development

GOAL 2: Provide Adequate Fire, Police and Emergency Service in All Incorporated Areas



SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: As the second fire station is built in the NC 73 area, it will require additional staffing and communication infrastructure. The town should create short and long-term plans for public safety, following the best professional standards and goals of the comprehensive plan.

- Consider requiring sprinklers in all building types, including single-family residential
- Compare street design guidelines to the ability of emergency vehicles to provide adequate fire response
- Provide a magistrate in north Mecklenburg County
- Meet ISO rating standards for fire protection
- Evaluate the feasibility of creating inter-jurisdictional and regional service areas, stations and departments for fire and police

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As the mix of land uses in the downtown become more mixed and development extends into the NC 73 area, police and fire staff will have to adjust their coverage, staffing and training plans. Public safety cannot be compromised as a result of increased density and commercial development.

- Identify innovative solutions to future public safety needs
- Continue community policing strategies to prevent crime
- Anticipate greater public safety concerns during the development review process
- Identify ways to link service calls, population ratios, and other industry standards to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance
- Modify design guidelines of streets to accommodate reasonably-sized emergency vehicles
- Improve code enforcement capabilities

GOAL 3: Prepare for Future Staffing, Administration Needs, and Public Relations

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should focus on training existing staff and developing succession plans. Greater interdepartmental coordination should result in more effective planning and community-based education programs.

- Update the staffing plan to include a succession plan and professional development plan
- Provide training to all staff on the most innovative practices and technologies in their field
- Form interdepartmental staff teams for town programs and projects
- Improve interdepartmental communication
- Support local news and media sources
- Administer the citizen survey on a biannual basis, including questions on tax rates relative to specific services or facilities
- Maintain sufficient staffing in all departments

ONGOING INITIATIVES: As the pace of development intensifies, staff will focus on plan approvals, inspection, public communication and environmental resource protection. Each department will slowly begin to add staff trained to handle the anticipated needs of incoming residents and businesses.

- Perform annual review of core and specialized services
- Continue open government philosophy in town governance
- Continue to describe town accomplishments on website
- Continue to support MI-Connection as a venue for broadcasting town events
- Develop measurable goals for responsiveness and overall communication with the public
- Employ emerging trends in public communication, such as the use of social networking websites, electronic media, niche publications



GOAL 4: Continue to Provide Excellence in Recreation, Public Works and Planning Services

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: All departments should strive to be recognized as leaders in their respective fields. As residents seek to achieve more sustainable and healthy lifestyles, town services should respond accordingly. The town should grow its portfolio of services by expanding existing and building new partnerships with affiliated agencies and service providers.

- Repair uneven gutters, pavement, potholes, and brush in the roadways, bikeways and sidewalks
- Create a town staff position to oversee sustainability or livability initiatives
- Create a local transportation improvement plan
- Prepare construction documents for priority transportation needs to ensure funding readiness
- Consider requiring Traffic Impact Analysis for commercial development
- Create a town staff position to enforce local zoning codes
- Coordinate local parks and recreation activities with regional agencies, the Ada Jenkins Center, neighboring jurisdictions and Davidson College

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Town staff should continue to focus on sustainable services such as tree maintenance, code enforcement, tourism management, and active living programming. New services will require new equipment and personnel.

- Continue to create and reevaluate small area plans
- Provide sufficient funds for park maintenance
- Measure the mix of land uses and resulting impacts of local tax revenue

GOAL 5: Establish Good Working Relationships and Firm Priorities with Regional Agencies, Utility Providers, and Adjoining Jurisdictions

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Given the importance of transportation systems, the north Mecklenburg County and south Iredell County area should continue to work closely to plan improvements to the road and transit network. In order to maintain high quality of life for Davidson residents and provide low-cost services, the town should work with its regional partners to identify creative ways to jointly serve the region's residents.

- Identify feasible alternatives for north-south travel with neighboring jurisdictions
- Create a staff position to focus on transportation planning
- Continue to require that all new utility lines be buried underground
- Support widening I-77 but not at the expense of pedestrian safety or sense of place
- Market MI-Connection as an incentive to high growth industries and professional services

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The north Mecklenburg County and south Iredell County area should continue to work toward good connectivity withing the larger region, primarily through well-planned transportation networks and communication systems. The town should support the construction of two-lane roads and multi-modal streets with the understanding that some rural roads may require three to four lanes or controlled access. Utility companies will continue to control significant amounts of property, so Davidson and its neighbors should meet with utilities on a regular basis to ensure compatibility with local plans.

- Work with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Organization (MUMPO) to ensure compatibility of land uses with access management policies and road maintenance and improvement plans
- Continue involvement in regional transportation planning organizations
- Continue to work closely with neighboring towns to manage regional traffic concerns and the design of new roads and improvements
- Work closely with Davidson College to provide public services



- Minimize the number of new or expanded utility rights of way
- Encourage utility companies to use sustainable vegetation management practices to allow more variety of built uses within utility rights of ways and easements
- Maintain authorization to control of water and sewer extensions
- Ensure that MI-Connection is the premier communications and broadband provider in the region

MAINTAIN QUALITY DESIGN AND SOUND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Vision

Davidson is well known for its historic architecture, preservation of open space, and bicycle and pedestrian-oriented design. The town’s planning principles should continue to guide development decisions, but new techniques and theory should be explored to manage growth. Incentives should be employed to encourage development near existing neighborhoods and promote sustainable management of open space in the rural area. Redevelopment of downtown should not require the demolition of historic properties or the consumption of high quality natural habitats. Potential impacts of new development should be carefully considered in light of local residents’ quality of life, including impacts on the town’s fiscal health, property rights, pedestrian and cyclists’ safety, and the natural environment. Impacts to the regional population should be carefully considered with those of local residents.

GOAL 1: Prioritize Infill and Mixed-Use Development Within or Near Already Developed Areas

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: In keeping with the Targeted Growth Plan described in Chapter 4 of the comprehensive plan, the town should establish the downtown and village area (older surrounding neighborhoods) as the highest priority for infill, redevelopment and mixed use. The town should develop an incentive package to encourage this type of growth over the next ten years.

- Continue to allow for limited single-family infill development and redevelopment in the Village Infill Planning Area
- Consider opportunities for joint use or ownership of underutilized buildings or space
- Remove barriers to development in the Village Center Planning Area
- Prepare construction documents and seek funding for a parking deck in the downtown area

ONGOING INITIATIVES: Transit will spur development in the downtown, and residents will need to be reassured that new development is in keeping with the comprehensive plan. The town should continue to monitor parking and vehicle congestion in the downtown area and ensure adequate levels of service.

- Encourage residential development, especially workforce and rental housing above commercial uses in the Village Center Planning Area
- Design flexible spaces in the downtown area to accommodate various uses
- Accommodate generous densities for mixed use development near downtown and the transit station
- Provide additional mixed use centers close to existing neighborhoods
- Redevelop vacant or underutilized properties in the downtown
- Make construction of downtown and surrounding road connections or improvements a top priority

GOAL 2: Ensure Compatibility and Connectivity of New Development with Surrounding Context

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: Planning will begin for outlying neighborhood and employment centers, especially near Iredell County and NC 73. The town should continue joint planning efforts with adjacent municipalities to ensure safe and effective transportation, quality employment opportunities, and well-integrated open space.

- Identify metrics and guidelines for noise pollution and mitigation



CHAPTER 3 - GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Require a green checklist as part of permitting process for new construction
- Establish “good neighbor” policies for development during construction process
- Strengthen requirements for the placement and screening of utilities
- Update small area plans and regional transportation plans to show preferred road alignments

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The town should allocate significant staff time to code enforcement and neighborhood communications as new developments mature. Developers should be encouraged to meet regularly with surrounding property owners to discuss nuisance issues and any emerging environmental concerns during construction. The town should continue to support regional transportation and conservation initiatives.

- Coordinate the downtown and Exit 30 areas with compatible development
- Avoid redundant and distracting signage
- Minimize outdoor lighting glare possibly through a model dark sky lighting ordinance
- Minimize noise pollution
- Promote the use of green and local materials in new development
- Coordinate new development proposals with approved small area plans
- Consider rezoning properties in the Growth Reserve to better regulate the timing and type of development
- Consider ways commercial business can be both pedestrian-oriented and senior-friendly
- Continue to discourage franchise architecture

GOAL 3: Preserve the Rural Landscape

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: The town should update ordinances for the Rural Planning Area to encourage cluster development and rural viewshed preservation. New road connections or improvements should be carefully planned to minimize negative impact on sensitive natural assets, active farmland, and anticipated land use development.

- Reevaluate the alignment of planned roads in the rural area
- Create scenic overlay district ordinances along rural roads
- Consider rezoning rural properties to current use
- Create design guidelines for the Rural Planning Area
- Consider ways to make farmhouse cluster and conservation subdivisions viable options in the rural area
- Investigate agriburbs (farm-centered neighborhoods) and co-housing as possible options for rural subdivision models

ONGOING INITIATIVES: The town should consider best practices for well-timed annexation and utility extensions in the rural area. The town should also work with state and regional agencies to provide incentives to rural property owners and farmers to continue agricultural activities. Development centers should have distinct edges, but intensities and land uses should transition from the urban core to agricultural and natural settings.

- Develop an annexation plan
- Research and implement appropriate applications of urban growth boundaries and transfer of development rights
- Discourage moderate density and dispersed development in the rural area
- Preserve active farmland
- Continue to control future sewer extensions in the rural area
- Increase road connectivity in developed areas in order to minimize the need for new rural roads

Chapter 4



TARGETED GROWTH PLAN



“Davidson’s traditional character is that of a small town, so land planning will reflect its historic patterns of village-centered growth, with connection of neighborhoods, reservation of rural area, and provision of public space.”

-Town of Davidson Core Value

Chapter 4



TARGETED GROWTH PLAN

The successful implementation of livability retains what is admired about Davidson and adds new or improved public services, spaces or events to enhance quality of life. Achieving livability also requires a balance between the rights of property owners with the needs of the general public.

Three general scenarios for future growth were evaluated as part of the comprehensive plan. The first, a “no future growth” scenario, is not a reasonable alternative because property owners have the right to develop. The challenge of the comprehensive plan is to direct the types, intensities and timing of future development. A second scenario, described in Chapter 2 as the Current Planning Framework, considers potential growth as a result of approved, planned and permitted development. The combined effect of these projects far exceeds forecasted demands for housing and commercial development in Davidson. The Current Planning Framework would also create a tremendous burden on local services and the natural environment.

A preferred growth framework is an economically balanced model that builds on the town’s assets and sustains quality of life for residents. This model must determine an appropriate mix of land uses to accommodate and shape the town’s future population and commercial growth. The town should be intentional in determining the location and character of future development. The Livability Themes and goals described in Chapter 3 provide criteria for a preferred growth framework:

CREATE DIVERSE BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth should create a balance of commercial and residential development
- Commercial areas should protect and utilize local assets

SUPPORT SAFE AND VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Development should be walkable and vibrant public spaces
- Growth should support and enhance existing neighborhoods

PROMOTE CULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMIC AND AGE DIVERSITY

- Growth should create a full range of employment and housing opportunities
- Housing development should be responsive to all ages and income groups

ENCOURAGE COMMITTED CIVIC INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Growth should respond to town, college and resident interests
- Growth should promote engagement in town life

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY CHOICES FOR TRANSPORTATION, FOOD AND ENERGY USE

- Growth should have convenient access to public transit and provide safe multi-modal options
- Growth should preserve areas for local farming

ENABLE FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Growth should avoid developing undeveloped properties
- Growth should not negatively impact sensitive environmental or historic resources

CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES

- Growth should not place significant additional burdens on public services or infrastructure
- Growth should result in a more balanced local property tax base

MAINTAIN QUALITY DESIGN AND SOUND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- Growth areas should be phased so as to not compete with one another
- Growth should create high-quality pedestrian environments



RECOMMENDATION: A TARGETED GROWTH PLAN

This Targeted Growth Plan identifies targeted areas of growth over a time frame of 20 years or more that includes building on and strengthening the assets of Davidson's downtown, creating complimentary development targets, and defining a growth reserve for potential development outside the target areas. The Targeted Growth Plan identifies a phased, development pattern that structures growth in a way that maintains and enhances Davidson's strongest community assets, minimizes sprawl, and preserves and protects its rural areas. Under this concept, growth will be guided by factors such as available transportation infrastructure, connectivity, economic growth potential, sustainability, and form.

The Targeted Growth Plan provides a flexible structure to accommodate future uncertainties. It recognizes that the timing and type of development is somewhat unpredictable based on economic conditions, ownership considerations, and other factors. Therefore, to be effective, a comprehensive plan must guide future decisions in ways that can accommodate future uncertainties. The Targeted Growth Plan defines a phased strategy for growth that requires the town to assess its needs based on the Comprehensive Plan projections and development completed to date, prior to initiating any new development approvals. In this way, the town can shape its growth in a logical and structured way, while allowing priority areas, such as the downtown, to continue to flourish over time.

Primary Growth Targets should receive the most immediate and intense attention. These growth areas will best serve the existing population in the short term as the community prepares for commuter transit. Secondary Growth Targets are the long-term solutions for economic growth and housing development. While planning may begin soon for these secondary targets, they will not likely be completely built-out for at least 20 years. Growth Reserve Areas are for excess development potential or supporting uses to nearby targets. These infill sites will most likely contain housing and medium-intensity land uses. The Rural Area should maintain its character by way of low-density residential development, active agricultural uses, and preserved open space.

The four types of growth targets describe a variety of well-suited and long-term economic development centers. The Village Center (Downtown Davidson) will continue to serve as the civic heart of the community and provide a wide-variety of retail and professional services on existing and redeveloped sites close to the future commuter rail station. Regional Commercial Centers are located along highly accessible and visible corridors and central to multi-jurisdictional residential markets; regional centers will provide large-scale retail services and office employment. Neighborhood Service Centers will be integrated within a larger mixed-use setting and provide goods and services to nearby residents. Employment Centers will provide professional service and technology jobs to local and regional residents; other supporting uses will also be located within Employment Centers.

Primary Growth Targets

VILLAGE CENTER - DOWNTOWN: The town's signature area is its downtown. This is where residents gather for events, attend town meetings, stroll, shop, and do business. Main Street is also the main interface between Davidson College and the town. With the strong possibility of a commuter rail station locating in the heart of the downtown and trends toward living and working in a downtown village, development of the downtown should be considered the first target area for growth in Davidson. Growth will be mixed-use, allowing for a variety of live/work settings, unique retail businesses, vibrant public spaces, and additional civic uses. Walkable streets will connect to surrounding neighborhoods and adequate parking will accommodate regional visitors. In order for the downtown to become the primary retail and civic center of Davidson and a regional destination, other commercial centers such as the Exit 30 area should have distinct architectural qualities and serve separate markets. The balance and scale of office and retail spaces will prove critical to the success of each commercial center.

REGIONAL COMMERCIAL CENTER - CIRCLES AT 30 AREA: The Exit 30 area offers development potential for larger footprint development that may not be accommodated in the downtown. The visibility and proximity of the Exit 30 area to I-77 and waterfront will provide opportunities for employment growth.



REGIONAL COMMERCIAL CENTER - MAYES PROPERTY: The town has considered potential development along Davidson-Concord Road and NC 73 in a number of small area plans. Small area plans identified up to seven development nodes along these prominent corridors and recommended a variety of mixed-use retail and employment uses. The Mayes property is adjacent to an existing community, faces two high-traffic corridors, and has access to necessary water and wastewater utilities. This area is well positioned to provide regional neighborhood retail and services in a mixed-use setting.

EMPLOYMENT CENTER - WESTMORELAND PROPERTY: The Westmoreland property or other properties in the area provide an opportunity for a future employment center. This employment center will be similar to that described for the North Gateway and East NC 73 areas, but should also include local services such as schools and health care centers and neighborhood-serving retail. Future development must preserve important natural assets and rural viewsheds.

Secondary Growth Targets

EMPLOYMENT CENTER - NORTH GATEWAY: Recent plans for properties near the Iredell County border and NC 115 recommend light industrial and other employment uses that follow ecologically-responsive development and management patterns. The concept also envisions high density residential development. The Comprehensive Plan suggests that these plans consider uses and building types that would not compete with downtown development.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES CENTER - POPLAR CENTER: Initially proposed in 2005 as a large-scale mixed use center for the Poplar Center and NC 73 area, this target for growth is more suited for residential and neighborhood retail uses in the long-term future. The town should continue coordinating with adjoining jurisdictions to plan well-designed communities in the Poplar Center area.

EMPLOYMENT CENTER - EAST NC 73 AREA: This site along the NC 73 corridor has excellent traffic visibility and some environmental constraints, making it another good candidate for the light industrial or office complex described for the North Gateway target area.

Sub-Areas, the Growth Reserve, and the Rural Area

The growth targets described above are set within a larger context of one of three sub areas within Davidson's planning jurisdiction. The first sub area, "The Village", is comprised of downtown, the Davidson College campus, surrounding historic neighborhoods, and other properties within the town limits contiguous with the historic neighborhoods. The second sub area, "Smart Suburban", includes subdivisions created along the Davidson-Concord Road and NC 73 corridors as well as undeveloped properties between those neighborhoods. The third sub area has historically been referred to as "The Rural Area" and is composed of the undeveloped portions of the town's ETJ outside of the other two sub areas.

Within the Village and Smart Suburban sub areas, there are hundreds of acres of undeveloped or redevelopable property located between future growth targets and developed areas. These sites are the Growth Reserve and allow for future infill development after the targeted growth areas have built out. These Growth Reserve sites will serve as transition areas between the more intense growth targets and existing low-intensity neighborhoods or protected open space. Residential development, public services and civic uses (such as churches and schools) and additional neighborhood-support centers are ideally located within the Village and Smart Suburban Growth Reserve.

The Targeted Growth Plan places a high priority on the preservation of the surrounding Rural Area. Large-scale development nodes and new infrastructure extensions that would encourage large-scale development should not be permitted in this area. Developers would continue to be required to preserve land, create clustered, low-density residential neighborhoods, or actively farm properties in the Rural Area per the Davidson Planning Ordinance. The extension of sewer infrastructure and the construction new roads will need to be carefully planned to allow for necessary economic growth while preserving the rural character.



TARGETED GROWTH PLAN PROJECTIONS

Growth in most communities is typically incremental and based primarily on opportunistic events rather than on a thoughtful, well-planned strategy. This pattern of growth is both expensive and unsustainable. Sprawl requires a municipality to extend public services and infrastructure to an expansive area, the individual to pay higher taxes and energy costs, and the region to lose valuable farmland and natural habitats.

The Comprehensive Plan defines a framework for future growth that represents a logical decision-making strategy that promotes growth in response to community need. By defining a set of long-term growth projections, and by prioritizing this growth plan to incrementally meet those projections, the town can shape its future according to its need rather than as the result of external pressures from developers and others.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS: If all of the approved and permitted development projects described in Chapter 2 and the Primary and Secondary Growth Targets are constructed, a total built-out population for the town is estimated at 21,300. The population build out under the Current Planning Framework would yield a population closer to 25,000. Based on historic population trends, the realistic range for population growth at build-out is between 17,000 and 22,000. See Figures 4. 1 and 4.2 for more information.

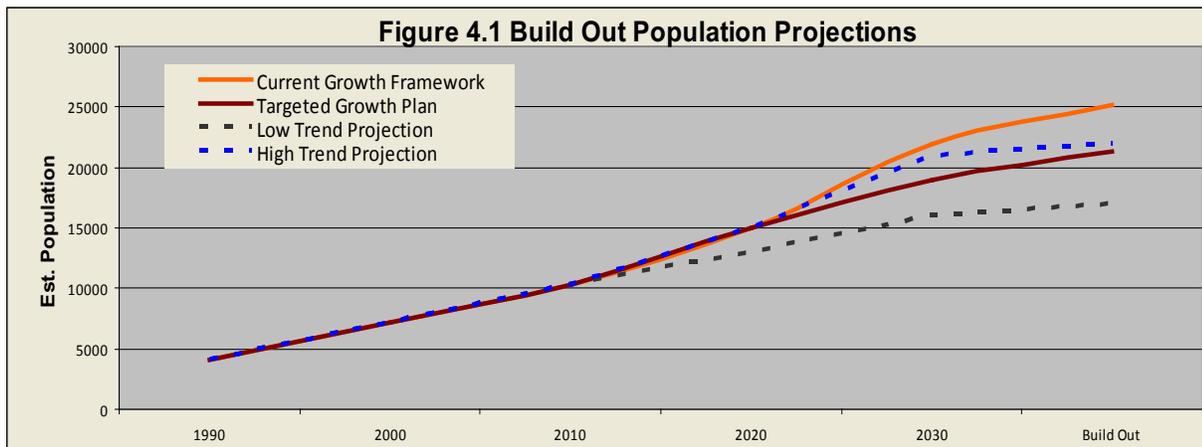


Figure 4.2 Population Projections

	Projected Population Growth Comparisons					Build Out
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	
Current Growth Framework	4046	7139	10300	15000	22000	25000
Targeted Growth Plan	4046	7139	10300	15000	19000	21300
Low Trend Projection	4046	7139	10300	13000	16000	n/a
High Trend Projection	4046	7139	10300	15000	21000	n/a

Figure 4.3 Commercial Projections

	Projected Commercial Growth Comparisons (Square Feet)					Build Out
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	
Current Growth Framework	n/a	n/a	1200000	4000000	7000000	10200000
Targeted Growth Plan	n/a	n/a	1200000	4000000	5000000	6000000
Office + Retail Low Trend Projection	n/a	n/a	1200000	2000000	2900000	n/a
Office + Retail High Trend Projection	n/a	n/a	1200000	2500000	4100000	n/a

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS: Typically, about 60% of the local population is considered to be eligible workforce. Trend analyses suggest a high-end population estimate of 21,000 and a demand for about 13,000 jobs by 2030. The 13,000 jobs would at most require 6 million square feet of total commercial space (including smaller retail footprints as well as larger industrial footprints) based on a typical ratio of employees per square feet of commercial development types. Commercial growth under the Current Planning Framework could yield 10,200,000 total square feet of employment space which is far in excess of projected employment demands. The Targeted Growth Plan could yield about 6 million square feet in commercial space which is much closer to projected demands at build out. See Figure 4.3 for commercial build out projections and comparisons with estimated demand.



LAND DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES: The most important message concerning growth for the comprehensive plan is not the projected population growth, since both the Current Growth Framework and the Targeted Growth Plan population projections are within a close range of long-term trends. Nor is the most important message the amount commercial growth, since in both growth scenarios, the market and employment demands will play a significant role in determining the maximum commercial growth for the town. The most important message is that projected growth can be accommodated using much less land and infrastructure under the Targeted Growth Plan.

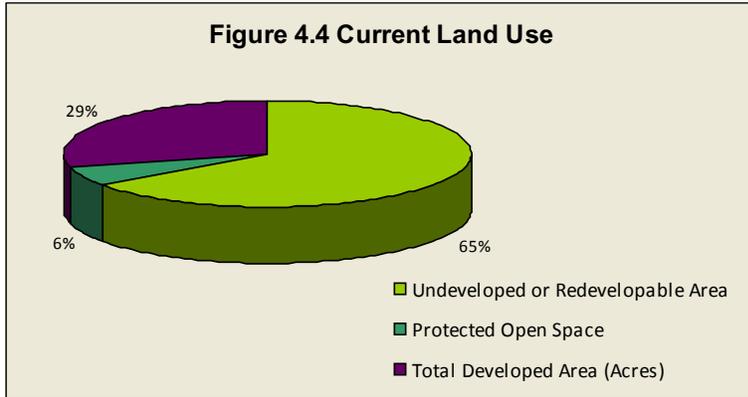


Figure 4.4 shows about how much of the town’s ETJ is currently developed, undeveloped or permanently protected open space. Today, the developed land area occupies about 29% of the total land planning jurisdiction.

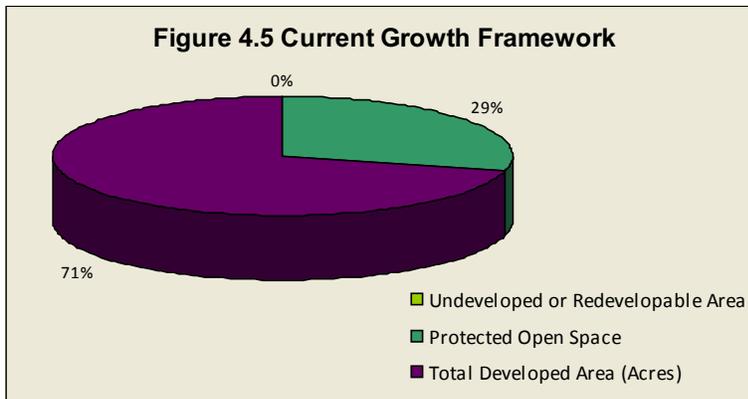


Figure 4.5 demonstrates that the Current Planning Framework would require about 70% of Davidson’s zoning jurisdiction for commercial and residential development, and the remainder in permanently protected open space.

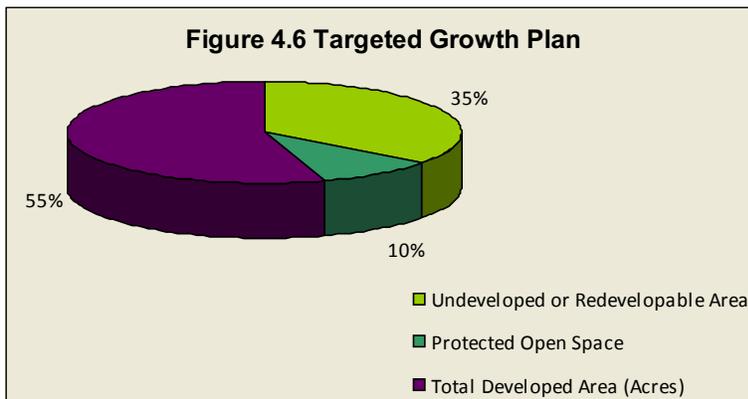


Figure 4.6 shows the Targeted Growth Plan requiring much less developed area (about 55% of the total), retaining about 45% of the land area as undeveloped or protected open space.

Development should be evaluated against the Livability Criteria described in the beginning of Chapter 4. Following these criteria will ensure that local services and infrastructure are extended efficiently and quality of life is enhanced.



THE VISION REALIZED

The Comprehensive Plan envisions that Davidson can remain a sustainable and livable town. The plan acknowledges that more growth and change will occur and attempts to direct those effects to the areas that can absorb them, while minimally altering the way the town functions. In order to make the plan's vision a reality, much will be asked of current and future citizens: strong leadership, insightful planning, and creative implementation. The quality and character of existing neighborhoods, open spaces, viable agricultural lands, community activities, and environmentally sensitive areas requires focused, prepared and intentional planning as the town adds new neighborhoods and residents. This Comprehensive Plan is a clear statement of our determination that Davidson endure as a place that people wish to call home.

Imagine Davidson in the year 2030... By Margo Williams

On a sunny autumn Friday, downtown sidewalks are bustling with activity. People pick up coffee and breakfast as they walk or bike to their offices, either from the train station or their homes. Several mid-morning strollers pause at the town library to check out the monthly calendar or pop into one of the local stores to pick up small office items. In between classes, several Davidson College students linger over lunch and discuss their plans to watch the basketball game later that day. On their way back to campus, some pause to window-shop and take advantage of the local sales, or buy tickets for the theater's weekend performance.

When the middle school lets out, a group of kids celebrates Friday with a lively game of flag football on the Village Green. The retired couple who live above the diner in a beautifully renovated apartment bump into neighbors as they walk along the downtown's tree-lined streets to the train station. They meet their son and daughter-in-law from Charlotte who join them for the Friday night Gallery Crawl down Main Street, and pass the new Davidson Elementary art teacher. They give her a friendly wave and tell her that they will see her later at her gallery, which is on the ground floor of her live/work townhouse.

The daughter-in-law asks them to stop at the Village Bakery to pick up a quick treat because she can't find a bakery in Charlotte to rival their cream puffs. She says that a cup of Davidson's famous local coffee to go with it would complete the afternoon. Main Street buzzes with men and women in town for the annual bike race, which causes restaurants to swell with customers. At the same time, people coming into town for that evening's Concert on the Green arrive early to shop in the unique downtown stores before ambling to a restaurant for dinner. They are joined by people leaving work who pause to shop and eat before getting on the train for home.

Traveling down Concord Road, passing long-standing neighborhoods to the north and south, acres of the rural area surround the town. Vast expanses of green land physically define the areas of development and the areas of successfully preserved land. Fisher Farm continues to be highly prized public space, and is now connected to the town by way of an extensive greenway network of over 15 miles. Turning onto Grey Road, the fruits of the town's and residents' labor are seen as small farms dot the landscape, aided by local and state incentives, which have helped restore the town's agricultural heritage. The food provided by these operations is often sold to restaurants in the Village Center and at the Davidson Farmers' Market. Additionally, sources of alternative energy, including wind and solar farms, provide power to most residents throughout town. The town is currently experimenting with on-site wastewater treatment at rural farms, and hopes one day to be completely self-sustainable.

Residents of Davidson's outlying neighborhoods, on their way home from work or dinner in the Village Center, travel down Davidson-Concord Road by Davidson's own bus or carpool to small pockets of development which feather out, like small rivulets, from the closer-in neighborhoods. Development along this corridor is more concentrated than development that has occurred here previously, leaving more of



Davidson's green infrastructure untouched, and it provides services to residents in the area who would otherwise have to travel to adjacent communities. These areas appeal to families that have downsized from a home in a nearby neighborhood, as well as to families who wish to live in homes with smaller carbon footprints. Some houses are actually quite small and have common spaces, like large serving kitchens, dining rooms, and entertainment areas. Those who choose to live in this kind of multi-generational housing, sharing their lives and surrounding green spaces, have embraced Davidson.

Residents in these areas appreciate their proximity to the rural area and are proud that their children and grandchildren understand and honor nature. They also value the convenience of having job and service opportunities within walking distance of their homes, provided by an interconnected network of bike lanes and walking trails. Windows light up in the taller apartment buildings, which are similar in scale to those in the Village Center, as residents settle in for the weekend. Within the ground floors of these buildings, parents, couples and singles make their way in and out of corner markets and coffee houses. Friends from the adjacent townhouse community meet on their neighborhood green to chat in the warm night air, while other residents take an evening walk or jog through the surrounding neighborhood.

Davidson now and Davidson twenty years from now are not such different towns. The underlying values of leading safe, productive, generous, healthy, and meaningful lives are still the same. Knowing that the earth's, and thus Davidson's resources, are precious and fragile, citizens continue to augment numerous programs, such as creating multi-modal transportation options, saving trees and open spaces, enjoying a wide variety of communal activities, supporting local farms, and building beautiful neighborhoods with houses of all sizes and shapes. Mostly, though, people who live in Davidson understand that they are its most precious resource, and they feel that great gift and great responsibility in every program, every park and every plan that help make Davidson their home.

Appendix



APPENDIX



“Citizen entrust town government with the stewardship of public funds, so government will provide high quality services at a reasonable cost.”

-Town of Davidson Core Value

Appendix



MAPS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Study Group Presentations and Memos (See Attached)

During the fall of 2009, members of each of the seven study groups presented their findings and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners during a series of work session meetings. Most study groups prepared a written memo or summary of their discussions, as well as a visual Powerpoint presentation. These materials, as well as maps and tables used to illustrate study group recommendations, are included in the first section of the Appendix. The reports, presentations and other documents were created solely by volunteer study group members and most accurately reflect a year-long conversation amongst residents and other stakeholders about several important subjects:

- COMMUNITY CHARACTER: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- COMMUNITY CHARACTER: PRIORITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES
- COMMUNITY CHARACTER SUMMARY PRESENTATION
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: ADJUNCT TO THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PRESENTATION
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GOALS RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PRESENTATION
- ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: PRESENTATION
- GROWTH MANAGEMENT: SUMMARY
- GROWTH MANAGEMENT: TOWN BOARD SUMMARY PRESENTATION
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT: SUMMARY
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT: PRESENTATION
- MOBILITY: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- MOBILITY: LOW HANGING FRUIT

Current Conditions Summary Memoranda (See Attached)

Consultants interviewed study group members, Town of Davidson staff and elected officials, representatives from neighboring jurisdictions and agencies, and other local stakeholders. Following these interviews, the consultants prepared a set of memos summarizing current conditions per the study group topic areas. The highlights of these summaries are found in Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Growth Scenario Calculations (See Attached)

In order to compare the quantitative results of current land use patterns and policy with targeted growth, the consultants calculated the development potential of various adopted small area plans, approved development projects, and land use ordinances. This study was divided into Scenario 1 (projections considering only approved development projects and small plans), Scenario 2 (added projections from land use ordinances beyond approved plans and developments), and Scenario 3 (Targeted Growth Plan, excluding some proposed development projects and assuming some ordinance amendments). The assumptions used to create the calculations are shown in the attached documents and charts.

Davidson Planning Ordinance references to the Comprehensive Plan (See Attached)

The 2001 Davidson Planning Ordinance reserved a section for a future comprehensive plan. Throughout the planning ordinance there are several references to the “comprehensive plan” as a tool for determining desirable open space, transportation networks, and other plan elements. These ordinance references will need to be re-examined following the adoption of the Davidson Comprehensive Plan and amended if necessary.

Davidson General Plan - Guidance through the year 2010 (See Attached)

The board of commissioners adopted the General Plan in 1993 which included a comprehensive set of principles, policy goals and strategic action steps. The Davidson General Plan was, in many regards, the first comprehensive plan for the Town of Davidson. The Davidson General Plan provided official guidance through 2010, and the Davidson Comprehensive Plan will follow many of the same principles for decades to come.

Adopted Plan Catalogue (thru 2009)

Beginning in the early 1990s and through 2010, the Town of Davidson has created a wealth of small area plans, studies, and policy recommendations. Many of the ideas proposed in these plans have been implemented using public funding or through private development. These plans provided essential information to the comprehensive plan process and will continue to guide future decision-makers.



APPENDIX

Comprehensive Plan Maps

SACRED SPACES MAP: Members of the Community Character and Economic Development study groups participated in an exercise to identify which parcels or buildings in the downtown area were “sacred” or preferably preserved for future generations. The results of these exercises are described by this map. Properties left unshaded were, in general, agreed to be “sacred.” Pink and green areas of the downtown are potentially redevelopable, given that the property owners desire to redevelop. The purpose of this exercise was not to promote redevelopment of any particular property, but rather to demonstrate that the downtown can support a large amount of redevelopment without impacting important cultural, historic and environmental assets.

GREENPRINT MAP: As a follow-up to the 2008 Natural Assets Inventory, members of the Environmental Sustainability and Growth Management study groups were asked to provide input into a Decision Support System (DSS) model. This model ranked and weighted several types of natural assets (such as riparian areas, prime farmland, and steep slopes) and created a map of Davidson’s jurisdiction showing potential priority areas for asset preservation. The darker orange an area, the higher the score it received from the model, and the higher it ranks as a priority for preservation. The purpose of this model was not to affect local ordinances or policies for use of public funds, but rather to provide guidance to growth and land use decisions (Targeted Growth Plan).

GROWTH MANAGEMENT MAP: Using the Greenprint as a base map, the Growth Management study group, considering input from other study groups, described four general areas for growth in Davidson: Village Infill, Smart Suburban, Rural Preservation and Rural Conservation. This map also described potential centers for future development and important transportation corridors. The purpose of this map was to describe a possible outcome of applying certain land use and growth policies and inform the Targeted Growth Plan.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE INVENTORY: The Local Government study group created an inventory of the local citizen advisory boards as well as regional committees having representation from Town of Davidson staff or elected officials. The list also includes a sampling of local non-profit partners either receiving Town of Davidson funding or staff support. This inventory may prove useful as the town implements goals of the Comprehensive Plan related to advisory boards and non-profit organizations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES INVENTORY: The Local Government study group created a list of services provided by local and county government, organized by service provider, jurisdiction, and statutory requirements. This inventory allowed helped study group assess the current use of their tax dollars and needs for future services. The purpose of this inventory was to create a baseline for future cost of services studies and staffing plans.

SCENARIO 1-- EXISTING SMALL AREA PLANS MAP: The consultants compiled graphics from the town’s various adopted small area plans into a single map. This map shows the geographic extents of planning and urban design in Davidson’s jurisdiction. Much of this planning work was done in partnership with adjacent municipalities.

SCENARIO 1-- EXISTING SMALL AREA PLANS-- DEVELOPABLE AREAS: The consultants extracted from the small area plans areas that were intended for future development calculated the estimated development potential of each area. Natural areas were excluded from these calculations.

SCENARIO 1 -- APPROVED AND PLANNED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: Calculated development potential in small area plans was combined with the approved development projects. This map shows the cumulative development impact of approved and anticipated development.

SCENARIO 2 -- TOTAL BUILD-OUT -- REDEVELOPABLE AREAS: In addition to the developable portions of small area plans and approved projects, there are several properties in Davidson’s jurisdiction that are allowed to develop per the current planning ordinance. The development potential found in the “unplanned” portions of Davidson’s jurisdiction is calculated. This map excludes small area plans, development approvals, already built properties, and publicly-owned open space.

SCENARIO 3 -- A series of tables and calculations were created to represent the development potential of Davidson’s jurisdiction considering different assumptions than those provided in Scenario 1 or 2.

The first table, “Built Out of All Targeted Development Areas (Summary)”, estimates the developable or redevelopable areas found in the Primary Growth Targets (Category A), the Secondary Growth Targets (Category B and C). Development projections are mostly derived using approved small area plans and the current planning ordinance.



The second table, “Build Out of the Redevelopable Lots in the Village Center,” makes some assumptions about development intensity for properties that were not identified as “sacred” in the Sacred Spaces exercise. The redevelopment of the Village Center (downtown) assumes a Floor to Area Ratio of 0.75 (accommodating a built square footage that roughly equals 3/4 the square footage of the property), half of the new development as residential and half as commercial uses, and a reasonable deduction from the development potential to consider street improvements, on-site parking, and open space preservation.

The third table, “Build Out of Select Small Area Plans...,” considers where the Targeted Growth Plan matches expectations first set out in small area plans. Development targets were assigned appropriate planning ordinance standards in order to calculate development potential. The development potential of those targets is divided into residential, commercial, retail and industrial land uses.

The last table combines the development potential from growth targets, approved development projects, and growth reserve to create a projected build out for the Davidson jurisdiction. This build out projection is compared with growth forecasts considering regional and historic trends.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: This map is another representation of Scenario 1 - showing the extent of small area plans in Davidson and surrounding jurisdictions as well as approved development projects. This map does not show existing land uses or projected development patterns as a result of existing land ordinances.

GROWTH PLANNED AND APPROVED: This map is a clearer visual synthesis of Scenario 1&2, collectively referred to as the Current Growth Framework. The Current Growth Framework shows a relatively dispersed development pattern with a heavy emphasis on future growth along high-traffic suburban corridors and extension of infrastructure and public services.

TARGETED GROWTH PLAN: This map shows proposed targets for future development and areas for additional growth reserve surrounding existing land use patterns. The Targeted Growth Plan shifts the main focus of future development toward the downtown and properties near existing neighborhoods and infrastructure. Additional targets for development are identified but not selected as primary targets during the next 10-15 year horizon.

DOWNTOWN DAVIDSON: As a follow-up to the Sacred Spaces exercise, the consultants prepared a conceptual model for how Downtown Davidson might redevelop. The graphic demonstrates that historic buildings and landscapes can be preserved while making room for impressive redevelopment opportunities. The model shows surface parking although current policies and expectations would likely yield a combination of little increase in surface parking lots and a parking deck.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK: This map shows roads, bikeways and greenways that currently exist in Davidson’s jurisdiction or are under construction.

PROPOSED MUMPO THOROUGHFARE PLAN AND LOCAL CIRCULATION ROUTES: This map shows the existing road network combined with planned regional and local connections. Minor and major thoroughfares shown on the map were recommended to be adopted by the Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization by the Davidson Board of Commissioners on July 13, 2010. This map shows a road network that is consistent with land use patterns called for in the Targeted Growth Plan.

CURRENT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE: This map shows properties currently protected as open space either owned and managed by private groups or by the public sector. Regulated natural areas are also shown on this map, including floodplains, and water quality buffers. These regulated and protected open spaces form the framework for future open space planning.

REGIONAL MAP: This map shows Davidson in its regional context, including large economic hubs, transit corridors, and interstates.