

SMART GROWTH IN ACTION

Davidson Land Plan & Planning Ordinance

DAVIDSON, NORTH CAROLINA

To the residents of Davidson, North Carolina, located just 20 miles from Charlotte, the essence of their small town is great neighbors and great neighborhoods. This small community is setting the standard for creating healthy and vibrant neighborhoods in a historic setting. The high quality of life is attracting development, which the town accommodates partly by revitalizing its existing buildings. Its new neighborhoods incorporate a variety of lot sizes and housing types, including affordable housing, and neighborhood parks within a five-minute walk.

To preserve and enhance Davidson's character, the town adopted the Davidson Land Plan in 1995 and an innovative Planning Ordinance in 2001. The ordinance seeks significant public involvement, a critical component for any community that wants to plan where and how it will grow. For example, the Planning Ordinance provides charrettes for every new development project. These charrettes allow the developer and the community to understand each other's goals. One developer says, "the [charrette]...forced me to come up with a new plan that was better than the original."

The town requires pedestrian, bicycle, and street circulation plans for all new development. Streets are designed to discourage cars from speeding, making it easier for Davidson's 7,800 residents to walk and bicycle around the town. To further encourage walking, the town requires narrow, tree-lined streets with on-street parking and sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Recognizing that housing prices can sometimes increase when a community creates great places to live, the town requires that 12.5 percent of all new housing be affordable to families making less than the county's median family income.

Davidson's plan and ordinance have allowed the town to build on its strengths while accommodating new growth. For example, the old Davidson Cotton Mill complex has been revitalized and transformed into offices, condominiums, and a restaurant. The plan and ordinance also clearly articulate the town's vision for its growth. This, in turn, makes developers active partners in implementing the community's vision of connected, walkable neighborhoods that maintain Davidson's legacy as a traditional small town.

The EPA rewarded Davidson's efforts with its Overall Excellence in Smart Growth award in 2004.

QUICK FACTS

Contact: Kris Krider
Planning Director
Town of Davidson Planning
Department
704-892-7591

Location: Davidson, North Carolina
Website: www.ci.davidson.nc.us/units/planning/Default.asp
Implemented: 1995, 2001



SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES DAVIDSON LAND PLAN

#1	Includes Mixed Land Uses	★
#2	Exhibits Compact Building Design	✓
#3	Provides Range of Housing Types	✓
#4	Promotes Walkable Neighborhoods	★
#5	Exhibits a Distinct Sense of Place	★
#6	Preserves Open Space	★
#7	Utilizes Existing Development	✓
#8	Provides Transportation Choices	✓
#9	Practices Fair Decision-making	✓
#10	Promotes Stakeholder Participation	✓