North Carolina: Transforming the “Good Roads State” to the “Complete Streets State”

Town of Davidson, North Carolina

10th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy, and Livable Communities
February 3-5, 2011
Presentation Outline

• What is a Complete Street?
• Reasons for Complete Streets
• Varying perspectives on Complete Streets
• Progress toward Complete Streets
Town of Davidson, NC

2010 est. population: 10,300

League of American Bicyclists
Bicycle Friendly City – Bronze Designee (2009)

2004 EPA Smart Growth Award for Overall Excellence
What is a Complete Street?

- Roads for cars
- Cycling and pedestrian networks
- Transit corridors
- Business life-lines
- Civic spaces
- Extensions of the built environment
- Recreation and exercise facilities
- Connections with nature
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

1. Preserve Davidson’s Small Town Status
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

Preserve and Enhance Unique Downtown
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

No Connectivity

Growth Must Be Sustainable with Connecting Neighborhoods
South Street Connection to Cornelius
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

Preserve Substantial Amounts of Open Space and Sensitive Habitat
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

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Re-Establish Historic Diversity of People
Affordable Housing & Complete Streets

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Lauren Blackburn, Planning Manager
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

Development Can Not Proceed Faster Than the Town Can Provide Facilities
Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

7

Rely on Unique Combination of Private Property Rights and the Health of the Community
Davidson Circles at 30

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Davidson’s 8 Planning Principles

Other Community

Lake Davidson Park

Architecture and Planning Can Either Enhance or Deteriorate the Quality of Life
Reasons for Complete Streets: Livability

- Create Diverse Business and Job Opportunities
- Support Safe and Vibrant Spaces and Neighborhoods
- Promote Cultural, Socioeconomic and Age Diversity
- Encourage Committed Civic Involvement and Responsibility
- Provide Sustainable and Healthy Choices for Transportation, Food, and Energy Use
- Enable Faithful Stewardship of the Natural and Historic Resources
- Continue to Provide Effective and Efficient Public Services
- Maintain Quality Design and Sound Planning Principles
Small Town Character
Sense of Community

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Connection with Nature
Recreational & Regional Interest

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New Targeted Growth Plan

Targeted Growth Plan

Davidson Comprehensive Plan

Legend

V Village Center (Downtown)
R Regional Commercial Centers
E Employment Centers
N Neighborhood Service Centers

Existing Road Network
Protected Open Space
Rural Approved Development
Smart Suburban Approved Development
Village Area Approved Development
Existing Development
Rural Area Reserve
Smart Suburban Growth Reserve
Village Area Growth Reserve

The Davidson Comprehensive Plan describes the vision for future development by the Targeted Growth Plan. The Targeted Growth Plan is based on criteria for development set by the Livability Themes and the plan’s goals and recommendations.

Davidson’s zoning jurisdiction is divided into three growth reserve areas: the Village Area, Smart Suburban, and the Rural Area. Within each growth reserve, primary and secondary targets for future development are identified, as well as areas for land conservation and farming.

The primary and secondary growth targets are described as one of four types: Village Center (Downtown Davidson, a large civic and mixed-use center), Regional Commercial Centers (highly visible and accessible mixed-use centers), Employment Centers (office, industrial, or service job centers), or Neighborhood Service Centers (small residential-support retail uses). Actual target locations and land uses may change based on current trends, but all will be designed as walkable, mixed-use settings.
Proposed MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan and Local Circulation Routes

Recommended by the Davidson Board of Commissioners
July 13, 2010
Essentials of a Complete Street

- Direct access to important goods and services
- Connected networks
- Integrated transportation systems
- Adequate pedestrian amenities
- Safe facilities
- Logical prioritization and cost effectiveness
- Clear goals and expectations
- Inclusive of all user groups
- Coordinated with land uses
- Attractive pedestrian environments
- Long-term programming and enforcement
- Creative solutions
Direct access to goods and services
Connected networks
Integrated transportation systems

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Adequate pedestrian amenities
Safe facilities
Logical prioritization and cost effectiveness
Clear goals and expectations
Inclusive of all user groups
Coordination with surrounding land uses
Attractive streetscape design
Long-term programming and enforcement
Creative solutions
Complete Street Planning Process

• Evaluate transportation needs
  – Specific studies
  – Citizen complaint, staff observation
• Site visits
• Public workshop and/or stakeholder interviews
  – Youth
  – Seniors
  – Low-income residents
  – Transit riders
  – Cyclists
  – Pedestrians
  – School system
  – Law enforcement and fire
  – Street maintenance
  – Motorists
• Regional coordination
• Local adoption
Tips for Success

• Commit to connectivity and sidewalks
  *Off-site connections, stub-streets and sidewalks are non-negotiable.*

• Set design based on context
  *Consider on-street parking, urban forest, building set-back, and curb design as significant elements.*

• Skinny streets are complete streets
  *Slow the traffic and share the road.*

• Fix it First
  *Add signage and lane markings on existing roads to improve visibility and de-emphasize the motor vehicle.*

• Engage in frequent and sincere conversations with alternative viewpoints
  *Conduct inter-departmental review of development and construction projects throughout the process.*
Complete Streets… Are we stuck?
Equal Opportunity Streets?

2% of NCDOT BUDGET SPENT ON BIKE-PED SYSTEMS

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Equal Opportunity Streets?

2.5% of Commuter Trips by Walking
5.1% of Commuter Trips by Bicycle
2% of NCDOT BUDGET SPENT ON BIKE-PED SYSTEMS

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Equal Opportunity Streets?

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Supply? Or Demand?
Davidson, For Life

- Do residents currently lead active lives?
- What are the barriers?
- What programs can be developed to encourage more bike/walking commutes, safety awareness, etc?
- How can we evaluate success?
- How can we be a model to other communities?
Next Steps

• Continue to add infrastructure
• Encourage and promote active lifestyles
• Monitor positive change in personal and community health as a result
• Further refine policies to consider all user-groups in design of complete streets
Thanks!

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