

An aerial photograph of Davidson, North Carolina, showing a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings, streets, and green spaces. The town is nestled in a valley with hills in the background. The text is overlaid on the top portion of the image.

# 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



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# 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



1950s



2006

1

**Preserve Davidson's Small Town Status**





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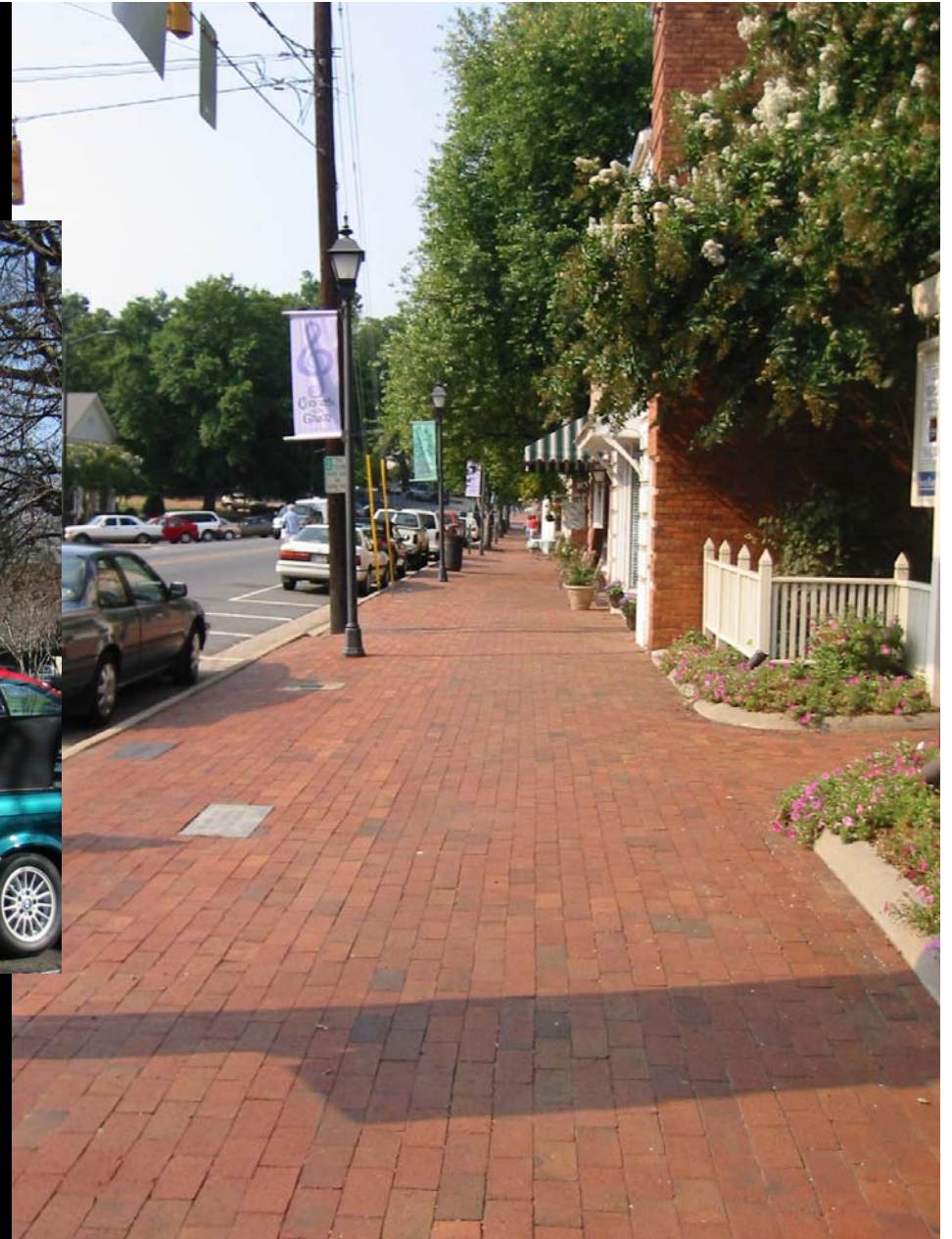
# Davidson's 8 Planning Principles



2

Preserve and Enhance Unique Downtown





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# Davidson's 8 Planning Principles



3

**Growth Must Be Sustainable with Connecting Neighborhoods**

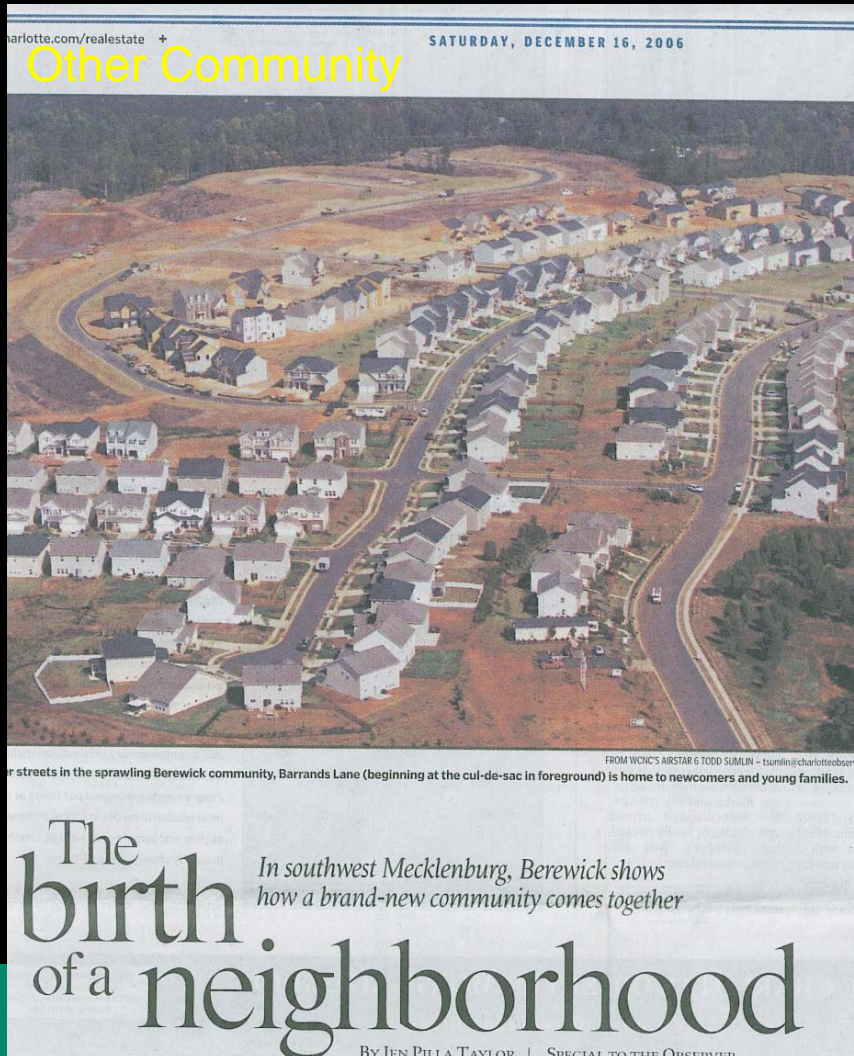


# South Street Connection to Cornelius





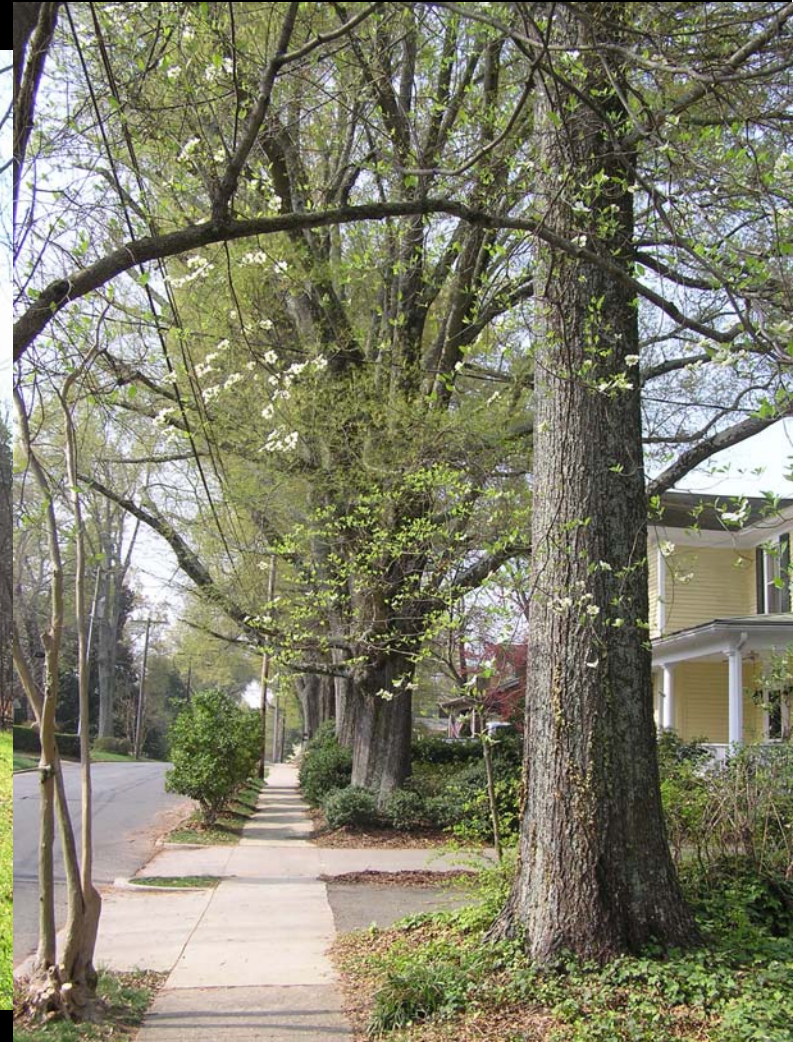
# Davidson's 8 Planning Principles



4

**Preserve Substantial Amounts of Open Space and Sensitive Habitat**





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# Davidson's 8 Planning Principles



5

Re-Establish Historic Diversity of People



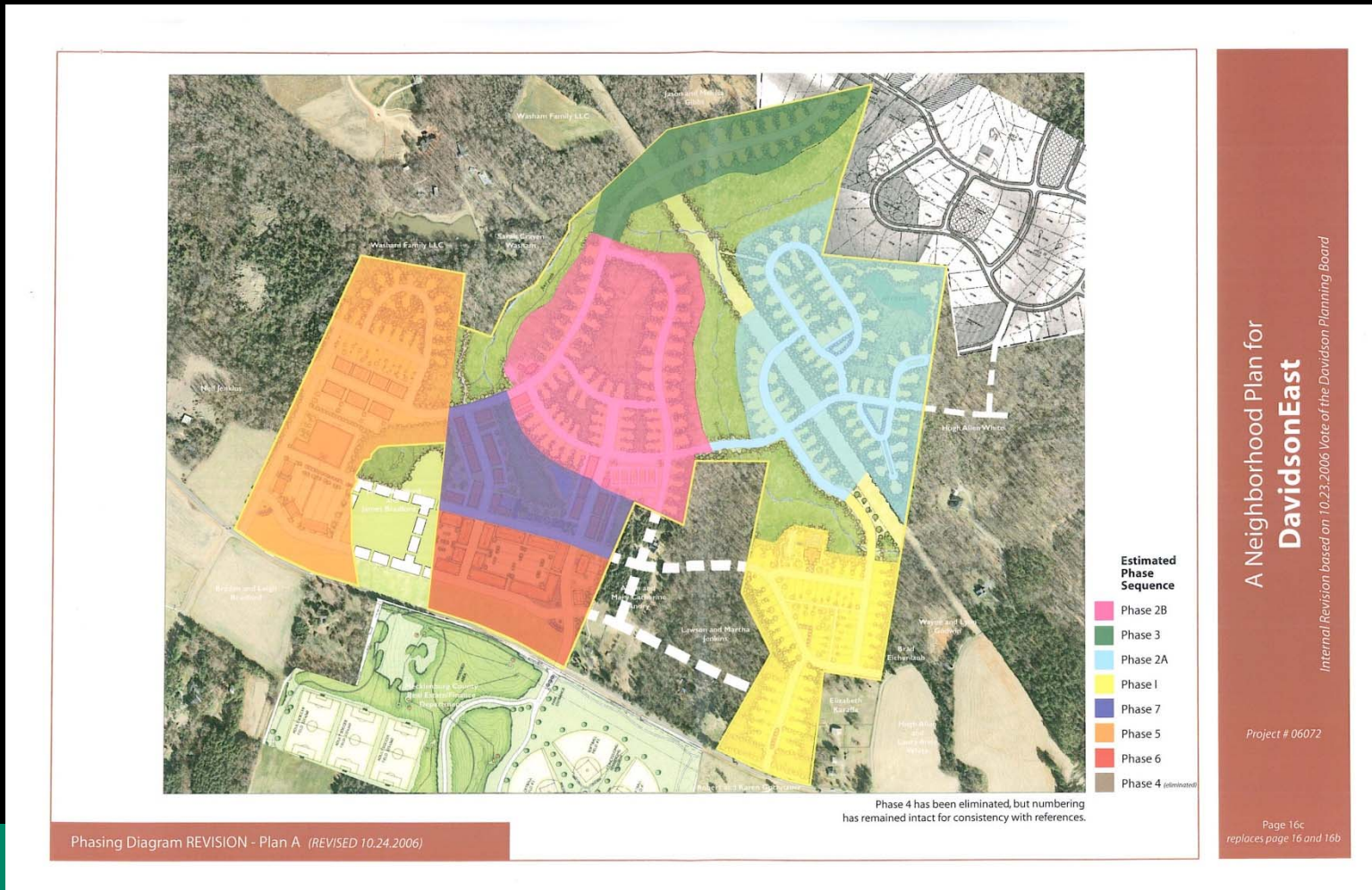
# Affordable Housing & Complete Streets



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# Davidson's 8 Planning Principles



6

Development Can Not Proceed Faster Than the Town Can Provide Facilities





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# 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

8

Architecture and Planning Can Either Enhance or Deteriorate the Quality of Life





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## 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



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# Sense of Community



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# Connection with Nature

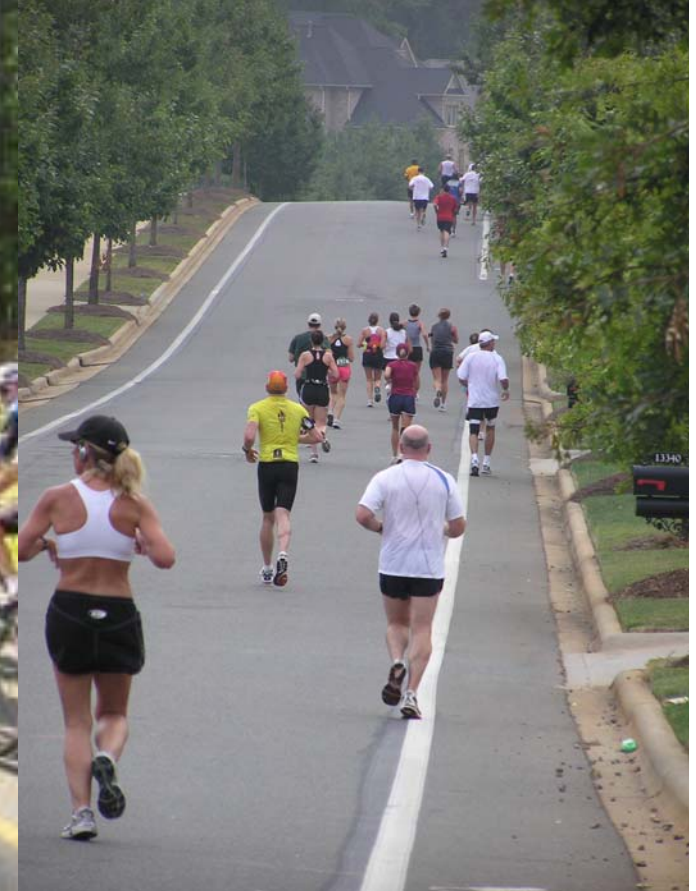


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# Recreational & Regional Interest

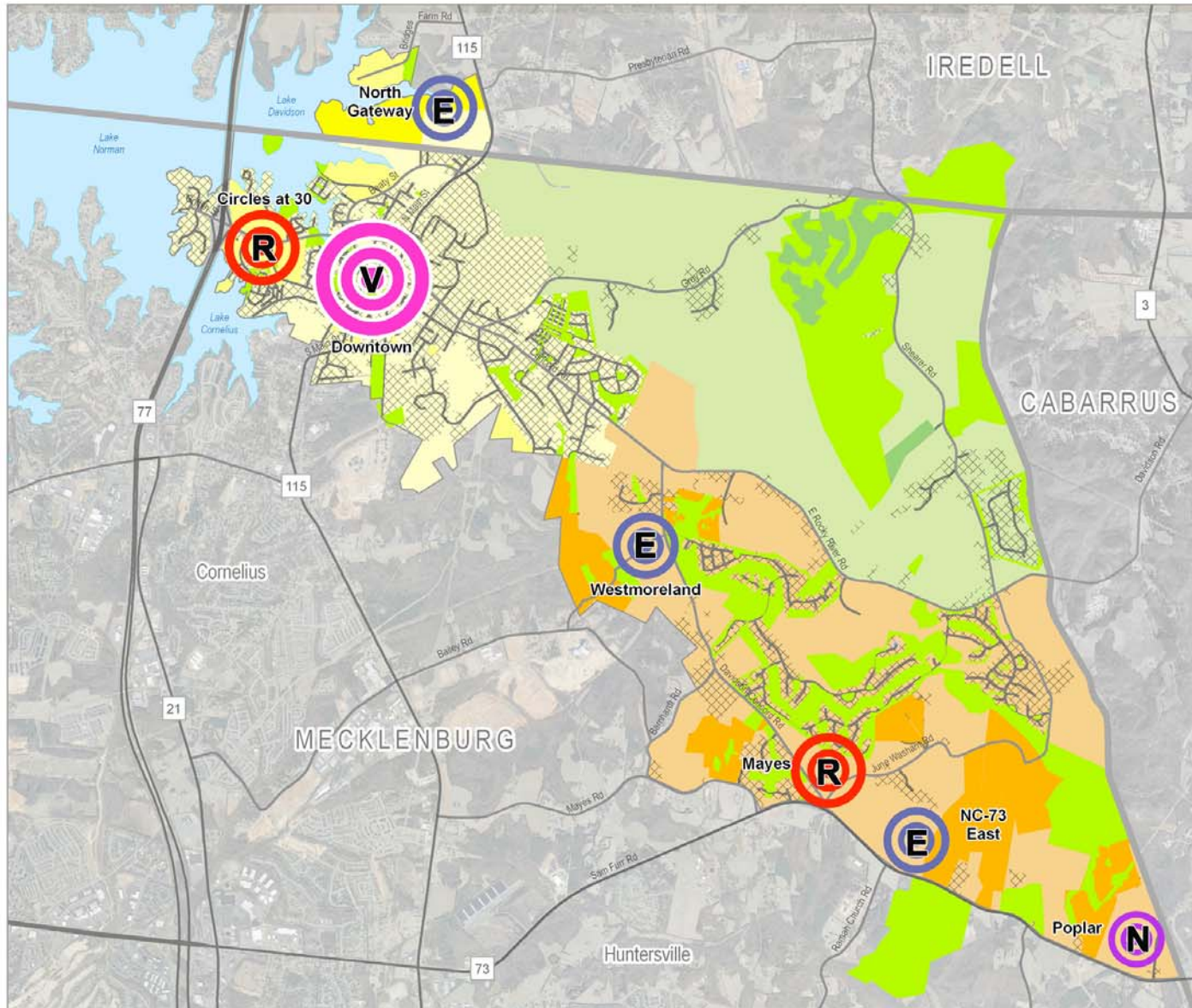


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# New Targeted Growth Plan



## Targeted Growth Plan

Davidson Comprehensive Plan

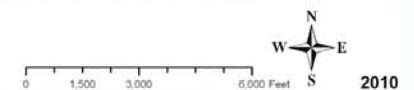
### Legend

-  Village Center (Downtown)
-  Regional Commercial Centers
-  Employment Centers
-  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.



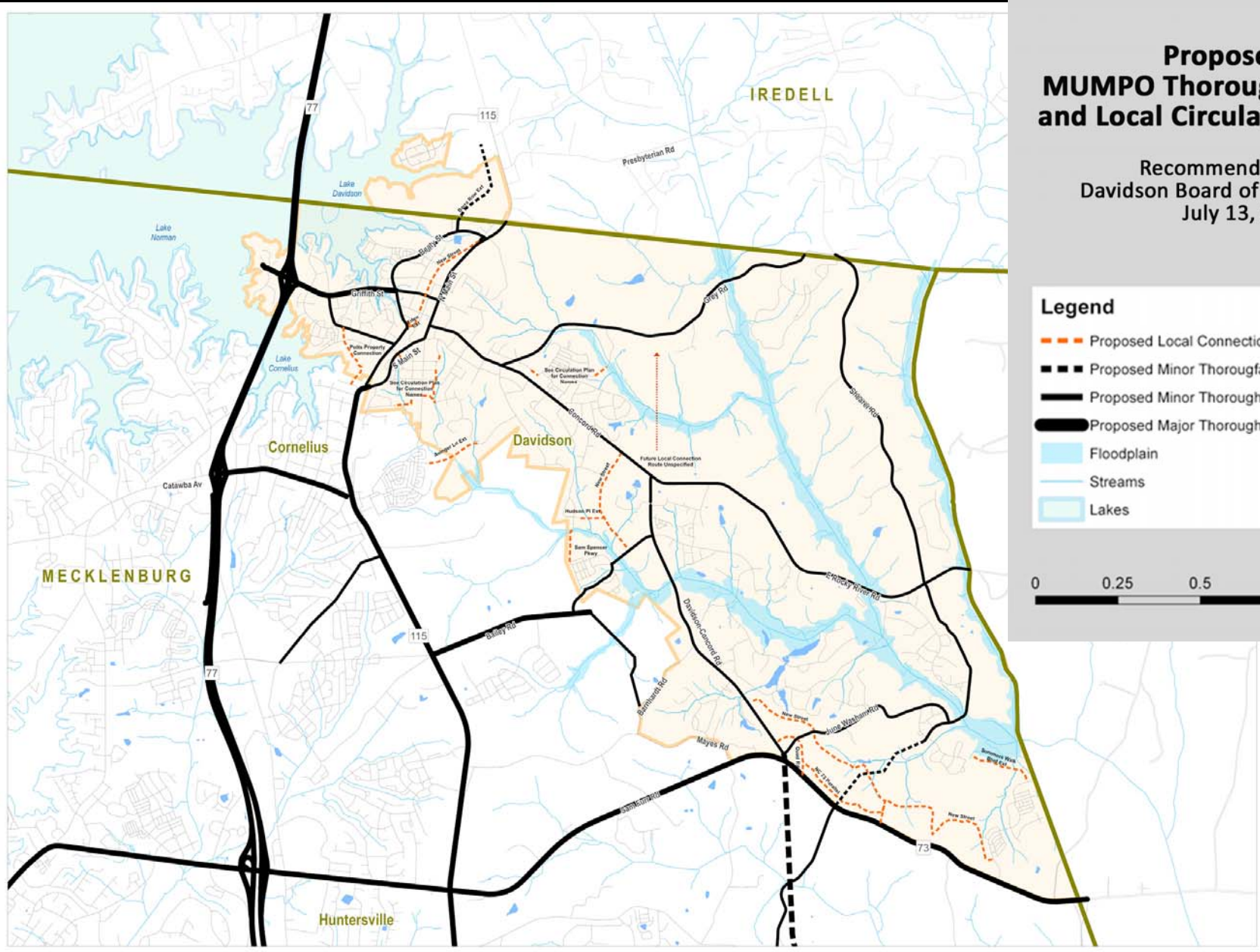


# Proposed MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan and Local Circulation Routes

Recommended by the Davidson Board of Commissioners  
July 13, 2010

## Legend

- - - Proposed Local Connections
- Proposed Minor Thoroughfare
- Proposed Minor Thoroughfares (Built)
- Proposed Major Thoroughfares (Built)
- Floodplain
- Streams
- Lakes





# 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

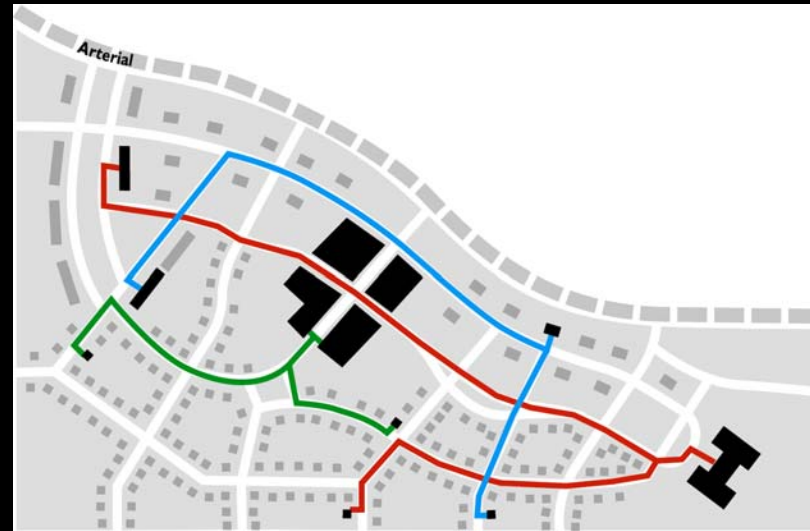
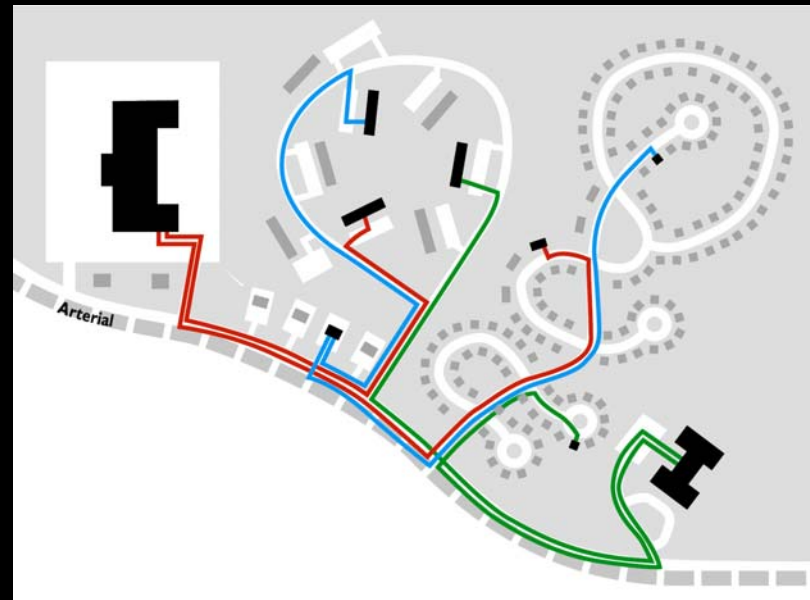


# Direct access to goods and services





# Connected networks



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# Integrated transportation systems



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# Adequate pedestrian amenities



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# Safe facilities



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# Logical prioritization and cost effectiveness



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# Clear goals and expectations



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# Inclusive of all user groups



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# Coordination with surrounding land uses



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# Attractive streetscape design



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# Long-term programming and enforcement





# Creative solutions



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# 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?

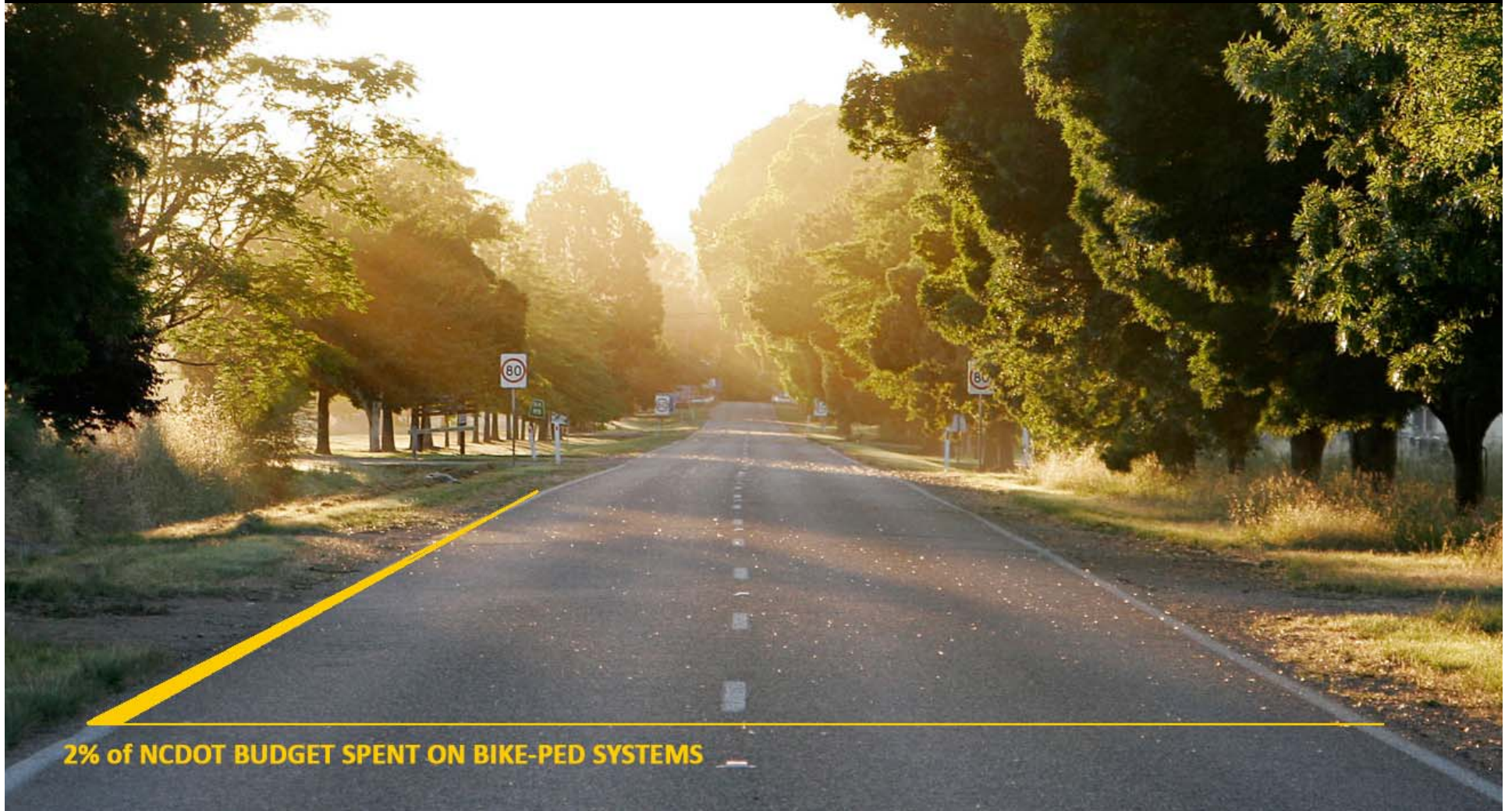


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# Equal Opportunity Streets?



**2% of NCDOT BUDGET SPENT ON BIKE-PED SYSTEMS**

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# Equal Opportunity Streets?



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# Equal Opportunity Streets?



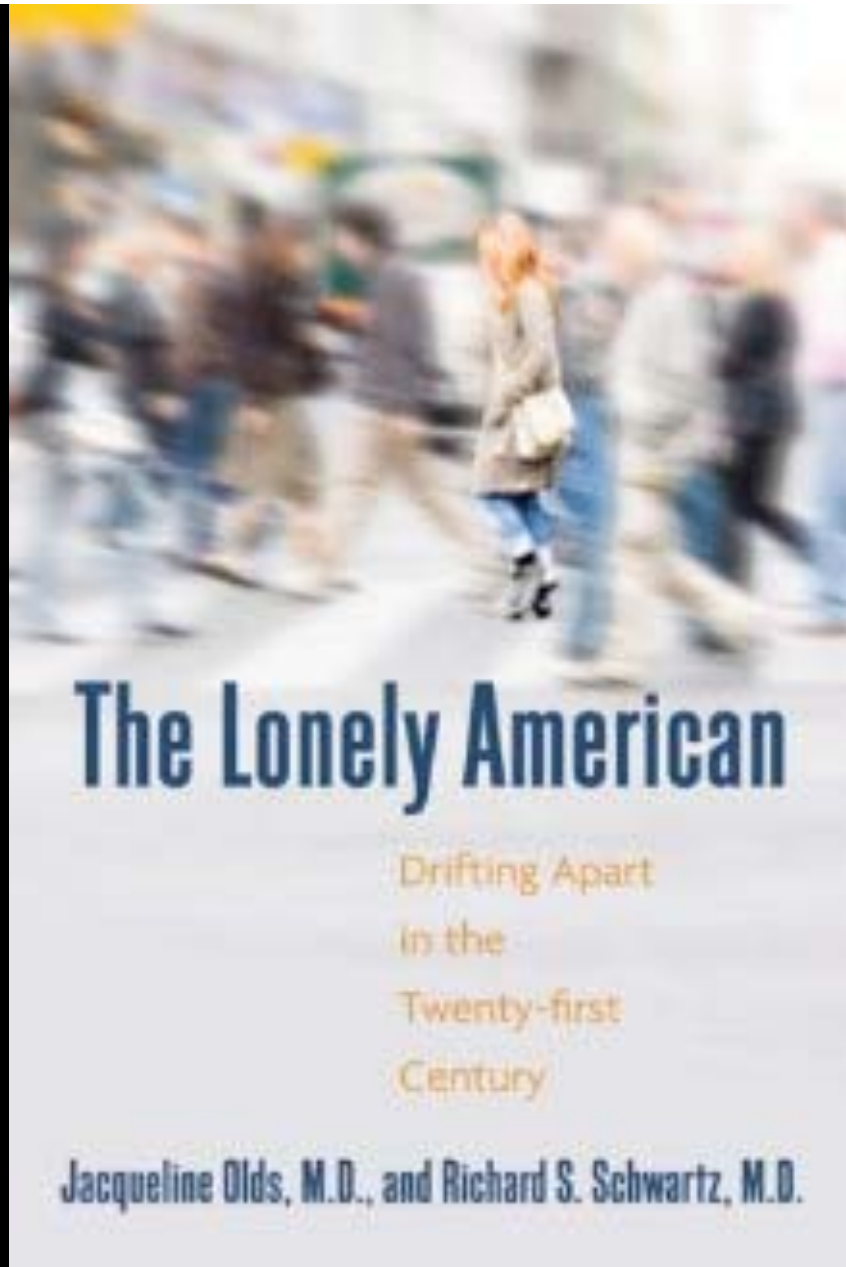




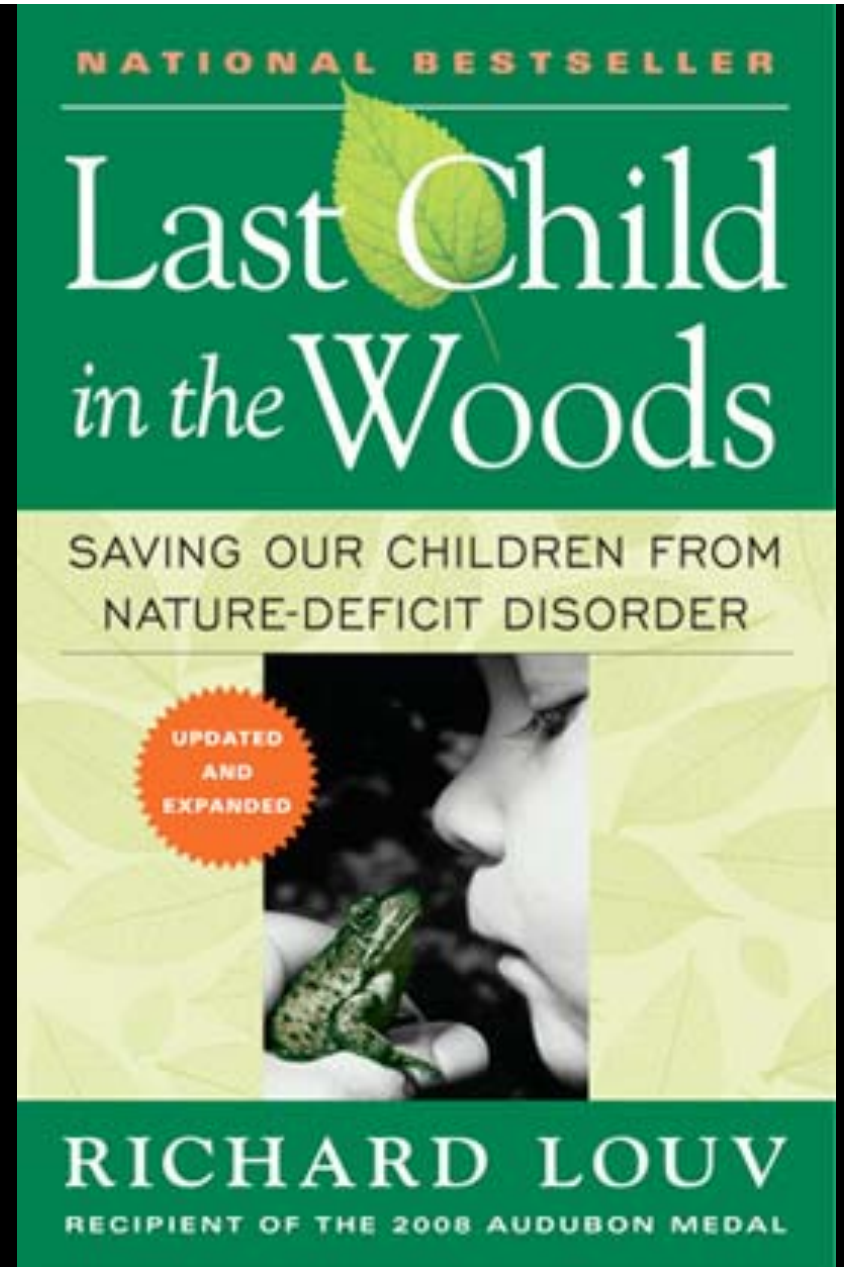
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# *Davidson, For Life*

- 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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