

Davidson, North Carolina

Population 11,750

Through a sustainable growth planning vision that began in the early 1990s, Davidson has been able to maintain small town charm despite doubling in population over the past two decades. The key? Davidson has created a community that caters to pedestrians rather than automobiles.



Town planners have preserved open space by disallowing drive-through windows and requiring all new commercial buildings to be at least two stories high. Instead of widening a highway that runs through Davidson's downtown, the town instead created parallel, connecting streets, making roads safer for pedestrians.

Davidson's commitment to walkability continues. The town requires new neighborhoods to connect to adjacent ones and undeveloped property via new streets and greenways. Flashing beacons at crosswalks enhance pedestrian safety. The town has also recently adjusted the timing of crosswalks on Main Street so that pedestrians can establish their presence in the crosswalk before cars proceed.



Key Lessons:

- Get feedback from residents. People living and working in the area can give firsthand knowledge on what changes to enhance walkability and safety would be most effective.
- Create a diverse mixture of destinations that can be easily reached by foot or bike. This will ensure that there are places for people of varied interests.

Story and photos courtesy of the Town of Davidson