

DOWNTOWN STREETScape PLAN

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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1. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Town of Davidson seeks qualified professional design/planning firms for the development of a Downtown Streetscape Plan. This plan represents an action item from the Davidson Downtown Small Area Plan (2023) which included robust engagement with local businesses and stakeholders. The plan will serve as guide for targeted streetscape improvements in and around downtown Davidson to implement key initiatives identified in the Downtown Small Area Plan and previous planning efforts. In addition to improving the overall aesthetic in the Downtown business district, other important guiding principles include protecting the Town’s historic identity, improving pedestrian safety, connecting Downtown districts to one another and the surrounding blocks, and activating public spaces.

The Town formally seeks to receive Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from firms that are capable of providing professional services including: research and analysis of best practices in historic downtowns, existing conditions analysis (mapping), identifying opportunities for streetscape improvement, conceptual design work, development of recommendations for successful plan implementation, cost estimation, and document preparation. The following information describes the plan’s context, envisioned purposes, scope of work, budget, schedule, organization, submittal requirements, and selection criteria.

2. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

2.1. General Background

Davidson is a town of approximately 17,000 residents and home to Davidson College, one of the nation’s top liberal arts colleges. The Town is located 20 miles north of uptown Charlotte along Interstate 77, bordered on the west by Lake Norman and on the east by rural farms and residential areas. Davidson’s downtown is included in a local historic district; downtown and surrounding homes are included in a larger National Register District. The Town has made a commitment to addressing increasing development pressures through thoughtful design and the implementation of traditional town planning principles – and has been recognized both statewide and nationally for its planning efforts. More specifically, Davidson’s Main Street was recognized as a “Great Place” by the North Carolina chapter of the American Planning Association and a “Great Street” by the national chapter of APA.

2.2. Planning Background

Beginning in the early 1990s, the Town demonstrated a unique commitment to community-based planning emphasizing high-quality design. Along the way, it has employed a variety of tools to further its commitments to: historic downtown and traditional architecture; progressive ordinances; deliberate, balanced growth; public art; and retaining a mix of socioeconomic and intergenerational citizenry. Likewise, the town utilizes a form-based code that prioritizes the quality and character of its buildings, streets, and public spaces. In sum,

it's a design-focused community that strives to remain at the leading edge of policy, planning, and programming so that its citizens may attain and enjoy a high quality of life.

Davidson plans... a lot. Since the 1990s, the town has undertaken many plans, which can be viewed on the [Plans, Reports, & Studies webpage](#). Below is a summary of plans directly relevant to the proposed Downtown Streetscape Plan:

- The ***Davidson Mobility Plan (2019)*** serves as a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) that evaluates moving people around town. Several mobility recommendations impact Downtown including introducing rideshare hubs, creating delivery curb-access zones, implementing multimodal wayfinding signage, and exploring opportunities for EV supercharging.
- The ***General Principles for Planning in Davidson (2020)*** reiterates tenets to guide decision-making based upon a community vision, as captured in the Comprehensive Plan. Two principles – “Downtown” and “Placemaking” – especially emphasize Downtown’s uniqueness and importance.
- The ***Davidson Comprehensive Plan (2020)*** describes a vision for the long-term future of the Town considering its regional context and current growth trends. Based on the planning principles, the plan prioritizes a number of policy and actions for Downtown. Some of these include burying power lines, creating compelling public spaces to foster interaction among residents, and broadening the downtown area through design to promote connectivity between centers (including North Main, South Main, Linden Mill, Delburg Mill, and Sadler Square).
- The ***Davidson Historic Preservation Plan (2023)*** focuses on strategies and policies to strengthen and reinforce Davidson’s commitment to historic preservation, including its Local Historic District (Downtown) and National Register District. The plan reinforces improving the linkages from Downtown to the larger town by increasing accessible connections to Downtown in every direction through placemaking initiatives, especially from West Davidson to Downtown and from Downtown to South Main Street.
- The ***Davidson Vision Zero Action Plan (2023)*** aims to reduce pedestrian fatalities on town streets through priority actions. In Downtown, these include improving visibility at crosswalks, modal separation, and reducing potential conflicts at intersections.
- The ***Davidson Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2024)*** analyzed the Town’s park and natural spaces ecosystem. Actions specific to Downtown included improving connections between Downtown and town parks, as well as prioritizing more litter receptacles and dog waste stations, especially around Downtown.
- The ***Downtown Small Area Plan (2023)***: The Town of Davidson community provided valuable feedback throughout the small area plan process that helped to identify nine downtown area priorities and challenges related to: community + character, mobility, public spaces, and sustainability. This plan is a targeted, solution-oriented plan that further refines actionable ideas and policy initiatives from previous planning efforts in the defined study area.
- The ***Davidson Board of Commissioners Strategic Plan (2024)*** articulates the current board’s priorities for town governance. It contains nine strategic goals that support the long-term vision of the Town. Each strategic goal contains a set of tactical priorities or

an outline of processes, and action steps to reach each goal. Continuing implementation of the Downtown Small Area Plan is identified as a priority.

At the end of this document are links to these plans, the Davidson Planning Ordinance, as well as maps showing the Town’s jurisdictional area and current zoning (i.e. “Planning Areas”).

2.3. Current Conditions

Davidson’s Downtown, anchored by historic Main Street, embodies quintessential Americana, bursting at the seams with both local character and historic charm. Much more than an assemblage of quaint brick sidewalks and historic architecture, Downtown Davidson is the nexus that binds the community together – neighbors, businesses, churches, events, and more. Downtown also operates as Davidson’s front door, welcoming visitors to peruse the Town’s local shops, sample locally grown goods from the farmers’ market, partake in a summer concert on the town green, or enjoy a dinner in one of Davidson’s many independent restaurants. Above all, Downtown has proven to be resilient over the course of time. Born of the need to provide support services to Davidson College almost 200 years ago, Downtown’s role has morphed as the Town grew to become both the literal and figurative backbone of the community.

Today’s Downtown, while successful and vibrant, is not without its challenges as the district grows beyond the traditional confines of “North Main Street.” Uneven brick sidewalks and improper street crossings can be difficult to navigate and problematic. The parking conundrum, whether real or perceived, remains an issue, coupled by increasing rideshare drop-offs and curbside delivery trucks blocking vehicle travel lanes. Further, there’s a psychological and physical disconnect between emerging Downtown centers of activity. These include the recently renovated Sadler Square, future Red Line Commuter Rail station, the Linden Mill, Jackson Street, and South Main Street. Through various planning efforts in recent years, the Town aims to explore opportunities to connect the disparate centers in and around Downtown through a menu of streetscape elements (including, but not limited to, improved and visually cohesive infrastructure, lighting, seating, furnishings, landscaping, wayfinding, placemaking, and public art).

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION + SCOPE + SCHEDULE

3.1. Project Description

The Town of Davidson seeks proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the creation of a Downtown Streetscape Plan. This plan would consolidate key recommendations from previous planning efforts, as well as any new recommendations, into a visually appealing menu of actionable items the Town can utilize to improve the downtown streetscape in the coming years. Key components of plan development include research and analysis of best practices in historic downtowns, existing conditions analysis (mapping), identifying opportunities for streetscape improvement, conceptual design work (renderings, illustrative concepts), development of recommendations for successful plan implementation, cost estimation, and document preparation. The plan would include immediate, near-term

recommendations for the *Primary Focus Area* (see map, p. 7) as well as medium- and long-term recommendations for the *Secondary Focus Areas*.

The Town's collaborative working relationship with the consultant will result in a visually engaging, usable plan document that includes actionable near-term and long-term options. To elaborate:

- **Process:** This plan is the culmination of previous planning efforts that included robust public engagement. Given this, the Town is not seeking to repeat these efforts. We envision a collaborative working relationship between the consultancy team and town staff throughout the plan development process. Key town staff include staff from Administration, Economic Development, Parks & Recreation, Planning, Police, and Public Works. A minimum of bi-weekly updates, primarily via email or telephone/video to update staff on project status, discuss issues, and review drafts is recommended.
- **Plan Document:** The document must be inviting and readable; it must also be visually appealing. Specifically, it should be:
 - » *Useable/Navigable:* It should be clearly organized and easy to navigate and strike an appropriate balance between text and graphics.
 - » *Action-Oriented:* It should explicitly state the intended outcomes, identify responsible parties, and recommend strategies to pursue for each.
 - » *Design-Based:* It should recognize the uniqueness of Davidson's historic Downtown and surrounding blocks and should rely heavily on illustrative plans and diagrams to convey the desired outcomes.

3.2. Project Budget

The budget planned for this project is \$50,000.

3.3. Project Schedule

The Town of Davidson envisions the following schedule to guide this process:

- **April 2026:** Kickoff Meeting with Consultant/Staff; Walking Tour of Downtown
 - » Produce Current Conditions Analysis
- **May/June 2026:** Plan Composition
- **Summer 2026:** Present Draft Plan/Revisions
- **Early Fall 2026:** Consider Adopting Downtown Streetscape Plan

3.4. Project Scope

The scope of work is intended to guide the consultant but also allow for flexibility in terms of the project approach. The Town of Davidson welcomes innovation and creativity from the consultant on any of the following tasks:

3.4.1 Phase 1: Organization, Background, Current Conditions Analysis

- Kickoff meeting with Town to review project timeline, data acquisition, upcoming development projects, and walk the scope area.

- Review all existing plans, documents, data, and any other information relevant (including best practices and emerging trends) to the project.
- Conduct initial meetings with key staff.
- Present initial findings.

3.4.2 Phase 2: Plan Composition, Draft Plan Presentation/Revisions

- **Plan Composition:** The consultant will prepare and distribute a draft plan to the project managers for review by staff. A consolidated set of comments will be provided and revisions will be made by the consultant. Depending on the quality of the initial/subsequent drafts, this process may occur twice (or more as needed, within reason).
- **Draft Plan Presentation/Joint Work Session:** The consultant project manager and/or town project managers will present the draft plan to the Davidson Planning Board and Board of Commissioners for review/comment.

3.4.3 Phase 3: Plan Adoption*

- **Planning Board Review/Comment:** The planning board will review the draft plan and offer comments.
- **Board of Commissioners Meeting & Public Comment:** The board of commissioners will discuss the proposed final plan in a public meeting format.
- **Board of Commissioners Adoption:** The board of commissioners will vote on approving the plan.

**This phase, including revisions, can likely be completed without consultant assistance.*

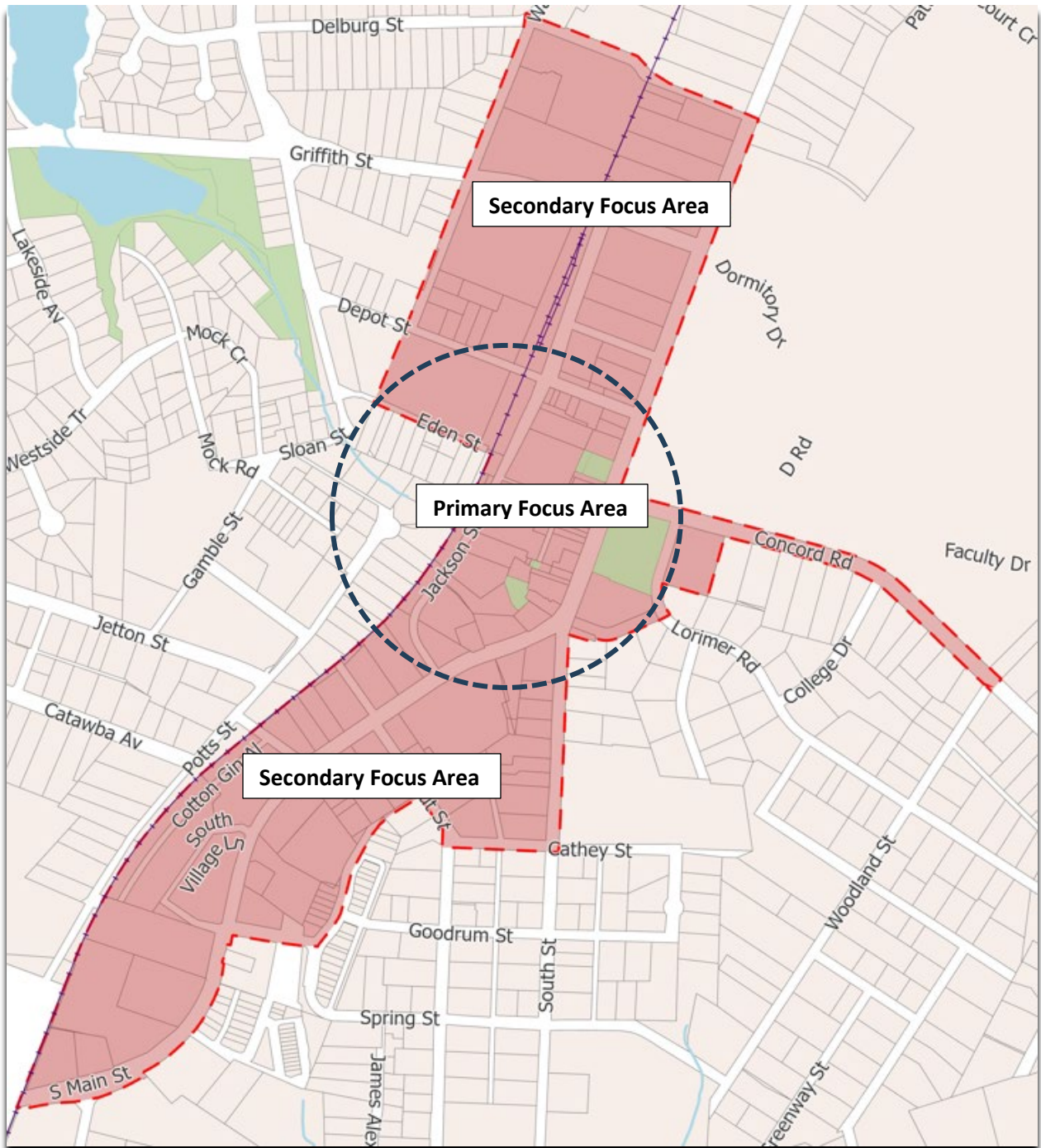
3.5 Project Area

The project area includes what is historically considered “Downtown Davidson,” its surrounding blocks, and its connection to the “South Main” district. More specifically, it includes the following:

- Main Street (NC 115) *from Delburg St. to Twin Oaks Rd.*
- Delburg Street *from Watson St. to Main St.*
- Griffith Street *from Watson St. to Main St.*
- Depot Street *from Watson St. to Main St.*
- Eden Street *adjacent to the Linden Mill*
- Jackson Street *in its entirety*
- Concord Road *from Main St. to Faculty Dr.*
- Lorimer Street *from Concord Rd. to Chairman Blake Ln.*
- Chairman Blake Lane *from Main St. to Lorimer St.*
- South Street *from Main St. to Cathey St. and fronting Davidson Town Hall & Community Center*
- Walnut Street *from Main St. to Cathey St.*
- Spring Street *from Walnut St. to Eugenia St.*

During plan development, the consultant may offer recommendations to consider expansion of the project area or focus area. See below for *Project Area Map*.

Project Area Map



4. PROJECT ORGANIZATION

4.1 Project Managers

The project will be jointly managed by the following town representatives:

- **Jason Burdette, AICP**, Planning Director
jburdette@townofdavidson.org
704.940.9621
- **Kim Fleming**, Economic Development Director
kfleming@townofdavidson.org
704.940.9622

4.2 Consultant Point of Contact/Roles

The consultant will designate a highly responsive, single point of contact to oversee the consultant team(s). The consultant will prepare and collaboratively manage with town staff a work plan including a refined scope of work, timeline, and budget. Town staff will assist the consultant with coordination of meetings.

5. SUBMITTAL INFO. + SELECTION PROCESS + CRITERIA

4.3 Submittal Requirements

4.3.1 Written Proposal

Respondents should submit a written proposal that includes:

- A. Firm Profile:** A brief history of the firm and relevant details.
- B. Team:** Identification of the individual or individuals in the firm/firms who will work on the project. This information should include a list of each person's relevant experience and/or qualifications.
- C. Experience/Examples:** Examples of previous work and relevancy to this project. This should include official references for the Town's consideration.
- D. Services Offered:** A description of the range of services and list of products or deliverables to be provided. This should include a description of what work will be performed directly by the lead consultant and what work will be performed by sub-consultants or affiliated team members (if any).
- E. Work Scope:** A scope of work to complete the project based on this RFP.
- F. Budget/Costs:** Costs for the project, including hourly rates and a not-to-exceed total budget.

- G. Schedule:** A schedule for the project, in month-long increments, including deadlines for completion of each Phase/Sub-phase including reports, dates for meetings, and deadlines for draft plans and presentations.

4.3.2 Number of Copies/Address

The proposal shall include two hard copies and one digital copy. Send proposals to:

Jason Burdette, AICP Planning Director

251 South Street

PO Box 579

Davidson, NC, 28036.

jburdette@townofdavidson.org

4.3.3 Deadline

The proposal must be received no later than **8:00 a.m., Monday, March 2, 2026.**

4.3.4 Questions

Questions should be directed to Jason Burdette via email and received prior to **Friday, January 30, 2026.** A consolidated list of answers to all questions received will be distributed to interested parties the following week.

4.4 SELECTION PROCESS

The Town of Davidson envisions the following process to guide consultant selection:

- **January:** Distribute RFP
- **February:** Respond to consolidated RFP questions to interested parties via email.
- **March 2, 2026:** RFP Responses Deadline
- **March:** Phone/Web Interviews [Select Participants]
- **March:** Select Consultant
- **End of March:** Finalize Contract

**The schedule is tentative and subject to change.*

4.5 Selection Criteria

Below is a list of attributes the Town of Davidson envisions considering in consultant selection:

- Qualifications and experience in creating design-based streetscape plans;
- Detailed proposal of services and specific costs for each phase;
- Ability of consultant to meet expected project completion schedule;
- Ability to understand existing conditions/local context;

- Capacity to deliver design-oriented conceptual solutions building upon identified action items and policy initiatives;
 - Creativity/willingness to innovate.
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6. MISCELLANEOUS

4.6 Notices

Respondents are hereby made aware of the following notices

Discretion of the Town:

1. The Town of Davidson reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
2. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this document or in any addendums to this document, unless the contrary provision refers specifically to this provision, the Town of Davidson reserves the right to negotiate changes of any nature with any applicant with respect to any term, condition, or provision in this document and/or in any proposals, whether or not something is stated to be mandatory and whether or not it is said that a proposal will be rejected if certain information or documentation is not submitted with it.

All deadlines are for the administrative convenience or needs of the Town and may be waived by the Town at its discretion. Once an agreement is signed, the parties to the agreement may enforce the agreement according to its terms as allowed by applicable law.

7. RESOURCES

7.1. Maps

- [Map of the Town of Davidson](#) (i.e. Area & Context), Including Current Zoning (i.e. Planning Areas).

7.2. Plans/Codes/Studies

- [Davidson Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Davidson Planning Ordinance](#)
- [Davidson Mobility Plan](#)
- [Davidson Historic Preservation Plan](#)
- [Davidson Vision Zero Action Plan](#)
- [Downtown Small Area Plan](#)
- [Board of Commissioners Strategic Plan](#)
- [Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#)

An excerpt from the Davidson Comprehensive Plan (p. 44) below:

ENHANCING DOWNTOWN: PRESERVATION, INFILL, AND CONNECTIONS

Goals 2.4-2.5 reflect an important set of topics that emerged from the What's Next Davidson process: The need to improve connections throughout downtown, including connecting its historic downtown core to the newer downtown area south of Catawba Avenue; and, the need to ensure infill development complements the town's historic growth patterns.

Concept of Potential Downtown Improvements

The map below illustrates potential improvements to downtown that could enhance pedestrian connections between existing centers of activity. Features such as concrete sidewalks lined by brick, small gathering spaces, and focal points for public art help to extend the fabric — improving the physical and visual cues to help people enjoy the many unique areas of our downtown.

Concept of Potential Downtown Improvements

