



RURAL AREA PLAN

Town of Davidson, NC

August 21, 2015

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Town of Davidson is a village of approximately 12,000 residents and home to Davidson College, one of the nation's top liberal arts colleges. The town is located 20 miles north of Charlotte along Interstate 77, bordered on the west by Lake Norman and on the east by rural farms and residential areas. Good schools, historic architecture, a thriving downtown, and the academic setting have resulted in increased development pressures both locally and regionally. The Town of Davidson has made a commitment to addressing development pressures through thoughtful design and the implementation of smart growth principles – and has been recognized both statewide and nationally for its planning efforts.

The town's extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), under municipal zoning control but outside of the town's corporate boundaries, includes approximately 5,220 acres. It is largely rural with numerous large-lot subdivisions; the transportation network in the area is sparse. The ETJ can be divided into two sections: Rural North and Rural South. The Town has undertaken several planning and policy efforts addressing land use, transportation, and conservation in its rural areas, including:

- The ***General Principles for Planning in Davidson (2001)*** instituted tenets to guide development, including "We must preserve substantial amounts of open space. The rural area enhances our quality of life. Great effort must be made to save significant hardwood forests, farmland, and wildlife habitats."
- The ***Davidson Greenprint Plan: Natural Assets Inventory (2008)*** identified the community's natural assets and provided recommendations to guide the protection of a sustainable network of open spaces, surface waters, and tree cover.
- The ***Davidson Comprehensive Plan (2010)*** describes a vision for the long-term future of the town considering its regional context and current growth trends. It cites the loss of open space as an ongoing concern among citizens and its open space goals include preserving 50 percent of the ETJ as open space; providing

public access to 50 percent of the open space in the ETJ; protecting the scenic quality and character of the rural areas; protecting water quality; and, retaining equity for ETJ landowners.

- The ***Davidson Walks and Rolls: Active Transportation Master Plan (2013)*** aims to create a vision for an improved walking and bicycle environment. It identifies future pedestrian and greenway/multi-use path facilities, including throughout the rural area.
- The ***Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2014)*** establishes a framework to create linked pedestrian and bicycle connections between parks, open space, and key destinations.

Attached to this request for proposals are maps showing the study area (i.e. rural planning area boundaries) and current zoning. Additionally, links to the comprehensive plan and planning ordinance are provided.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Town of Davidson seeks proposals from qualified consultants to create a Rural Area Plan (RAP) for the project area. The RAP will propose land use and transportation solutions as well as regulations to ensure implementation of the plan. The RAP should rely heavily on illustrative plans and diagrams to convey the desired outcomes.

The RAP will encompass approximately 3,780 acres firmly bounded by the Mecklenburg-Iredell County line (north); Rocky River/Cabarrus County (east); and, the Town's corporate limits (west). South of East Rocky River Rd., several pockets of adjoining rural areas exist (dark green), interspersed with various developments. The Rural North area (light green), however, contains the majority of undisturbed rural land areas.

Note: The designated rural Planning Areas (i.e. zoning) found in the planning ordinance are Rural and Rural Reserve. These areas contain different zoning criteria. The Rural North/South terminology utilized in this RFP does not refer to explicit Planning Areas or zoning criteria; rather, it clarifies the geographic extent of subsections within the proposed study area. There are no Rural Reserve-zoned properties within the study area.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

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:

A. Data Collection and Analysis

The consultant will document existing environmental, land use, and transportation conditions in the study area. The consultant will coordinate work with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, which will provide data-based maps of the area's wildlife habitats and natural resources. Additionally, the consultant will review applicable development and zoning regulations, past plans and studies, existing and planned infrastructure, watershed and floodplain maps, and population and demographic data to help establish a basis for the Rural Area Plan design. The majority of this work must be completed prior to the public charrette.

B. Public Involvement

Phase 1: Following introductory meetings with the planning board, elected officials, town staff, and the Davidson Lands Conservancy to identify major issues and concerns, the consultant will present the project schedule, process, goals and objectives in a public meeting.

Phase 2: The consultant will facilitate preparatory stakeholder interviews and an initial public input session to review stakeholder, property owner, neighbor, and citizen concerns, identifying plan opportunities and constraints. Additionally, the consultant will lead a multi-day charrette to conceptualize conservation and development scenarios for the study area; the initial public input session may occur on the charrette's first day. By the end of the charrette, preferred land use and transportation plans shall be identified for implementation. The final day of the charrette will include a public presentation of the plan. While the actual format of the meetings and charrette will be determined jointly by the consultant and town staff, they will be highly interactive and allow the community a variety of opportunities for input.

Phase 3: The consultant will prepare and distribute an illustrative draft plan and present it to the planning board in a public meeting. After review and comment by the planning board, the plan will be presented publically to the board of commissioners and citizens. The draft plan will be amended and the final plan, with its accompanying regulatory language, will be incorporated into a final report for approval by the board of commissioners.

C. Land Use and Transportation Plan

The consultant will form land use and transportation recommendations and strategies and compile them in the final RAP. Draft regulatory language required for implementation of the plan will be included in the final report. The town is interested in a variety of strategies for managing growth in the rural area.

Strategies may include: Protected areas, new development regulations, zoning changes, overlay districts, incentives, etc. The final plan will guide future long-term growth and development for the next 20 to 30 years. It will serve as the primary guide for development decisions.

IV. PROJECT SCHEDULE

Ideally, the project will commence in October 2015 and be completed within a six-month period, with adoption by the board of commissioners targeted for spring 2015.

V. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

The staff coordinator for the project will be Trey Akers, Senior Planner. Town staff will assist the consultant with coordination of meetings. The consultant will prepare a work plan including a refined scope of work, timeline, and budget.

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

- A. Qualifications and experience in creating rural area plans and regulatory language for implementation of plans;
- B. Proposed services and costs;
- C. Ability of consultant to meet expected project completion schedule.

VII. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Respondents should submit a written proposal that includes:

- A. A brief history of the firm;
- B. Examples of previous work and relevancy to this project;
- C. A description of the range of services and list of products or deliverables to be provided;
- D. Identification of the individual or individuals in the firm who will work on the project;
- E. A scope of work to complete the project;
- F. Costs for the project, including hourly rates and a not-to-exceed total budget. The proposal should include alternative line-items based on the following reductions in scope:
 - Town staff provides regulatory language;
 - Town staff provides GIS data and mapping;
 - The Rural South area is not included in the RAP;
 - Planning Board presentation(s) are handled by town staff.
- G. A schedule for the project, in month-long increments, including deadlines for completion of data analysis, dates for public meetings and charrette, and deadlines for draft plan presentations.

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

1. Jason Burdette, Planning Director, 216 South Main Street, PO Box 579, Davidson, NC, 28036.
2. jburdette@townofdavidson.org

The proposal must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, September 11, 2015. Questions should be directed to Trey Akers, Senior Planner, at (704) 940-9634 or via email: takers@townofdavidson.org.

Notice: Selection will be made at the discretion of the town, which reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS/RESOURCES

- A. Map of the Study Area & Context
- B. Map of Current Zoning (i.e. Planning Areas)
- C. Comprehensive Plan:
 - <http://www.ci.davidson.nc.us/340/Davidson-Comprehensive-Plan>
- D. Planning Ordinance (see Section 2, Planning Areas):
 - <http://www.townofdavidson.org/1006/Planning-Ordinance>