

Policy/Program Document

Tourism

Town of Davidson

Strategic Plan: The Strategic Plan includes the analysis and **vision** driven by five **Guiding Principles**:

- 1| CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
- 2| LEVERAGE ASSETS TO ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT
- 3| BUILD VALUE FROM WITHIN
- 4| REPOSITION DAVIDSON WITHIN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY
- 5| MONITOR SUCCESS WITH CONTINUED AND EXPANDED MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

Work Plan: In accordance with the Strategic Plan and subsequent Work Plan we evaluated the current tourism program at the town level and with Visit Lake Norman (VLN) who is involved in tourism and visitors in the Lake Norman region. In reviewing we found the following:

- VLN reports that it returns \$35.57 to the community for every dollar invested, and provides regular meetings with local hotel managers and staff to discuss visitor events/issues;
- Davidson attracts visitors through its signature events, including Concerts on the Green, Christmas in Davidson and April is for Arts;
- Davidson College attracts visitors through its admissions, sporting and cultural events;
- The success of Davidson’s restaurants and shops are highly dependent on visitors and tourism;
- Many of Davidson’s visitors return to purchase a (primary or secondary) home and often bring their business/intellectual capital – known as the “Turbo Tourist¹” effect.

Proposed Policy/Program: To improve or expand the visitor experience in Davidson, we recommend the following policy by the Town of Davidson for Tourism:

1. Coordinate with VLN to monitor programs and obtain visitor data through its services and via surveys/interviews with hotel managers (including Bed & Breakfast inns and AirBNB). Add future performance tracking/benchmarking to include: # of visitors and visitor spending;
2. Inventory and monitor Tourism assets and develop a tourism brochure (printed and online) to provide information about tours (culinary, environmental, historic, etc.), cultural and other special events in Davidson. Link to restaurants and retail (e.g. information kiosks aka “red phone booths”) through web and social media portals. Provide brochure at the LKN Visitor and Charlotte Chamber Visitor centers;
3. Coordinate and consider expansion of the shuttle pilot project, or the addition of a trolley or other transportation options to reduce parking and traffic and to assist visitors’ mobility between hotels, event venues and restaurants/shops. This may include partnership with

¹ “Turbo Tourist” as defined by Patrick Mason of Carolinainliving.com considers the impact of tourism on the local economy, particularly those nearing or in retirement. Per their annual report, the transient leisure segment (“Turbo-Tourists”), estimated to be 6-million visitors to the Carolinas annually, are here exploring with investment and relocation motivations. The research consistently reports that as many as 14% “say”, they plan to move or launch a business, bringing intellectual capital, investing millions and creating of new jobs each year.

Davidson College.

4. Coordinate and monitor parking issues in all key economic areas (Circles@30, Downtown, South Main and Davidson East) with administration and planning department; evaluate short-term and long-term parking options for each.