

Town of Davidson, NC



SNAPSHOT

Country	USA
Project Area	3680 acres 5.75 sq. mi
Population	15199
Demographics	88.8% White; 3.6% Asian; 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native; 5.4% Black or African American; 6.5% Two or More Races; 1.9% Other. Over 6% speak a language other than English at home.
Leadership	Mayor Rusty Knox
Key Stakeholders and Partners:	Town of Davidson Planning Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Sustainability staff, and Davidson College intern.

PROJECT DETAILS

Certified on: March 18, 2024

Certification level: Silver

Town of Davidson, NC named LEED Silver and recognized for its sustainability and resilience achievements

“The Town of Davidson’s achievement of LEED Silver certification shows the Town’s dedication to the advancement of a sustainable and resilient community,” said Town Sustainability Manager, Kayla Kovach. “LEED will be an important tool that will help us accelerate progress with the sustainability initiatives included within our Climate Action Plan.”



SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

- Develop and implement strategies that encourage the design, construction, and retrofit of buildings using green building practices, with an emphasis on municipal building practices.
- Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas pollution by supporting the transition to electricity, and other clean fuels as a means of powering vehicles.
- Commit to increasing renewable energy and advocate for utility policies that transition the local energy supply towards renewables.
- Prioritize addressing climate change through long-term, collaborative action through various regional partnerships and being a model for other small communities.

Certification Overview

The Town of Davidson, NC achieved LEED Cities Silver certification by earning 55 points out of the possible 110 points available across nine credit categories as illustrated. Some of the most significant strategies that contributed to the certification include the Town's focused approach to categories like NS reflecting a commitment to natural resource conservation and EN where provision of renewable energy alternatives stands out. In addition, the Town boasts a high quality of life.



Performance Score | Key Metrics

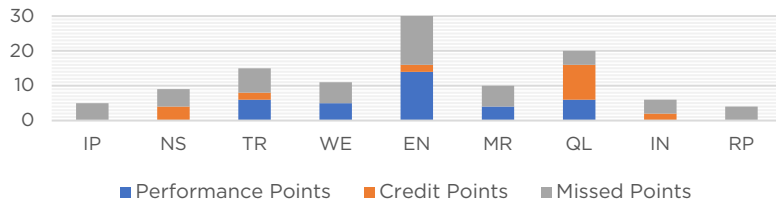
95/100 | Transportation Performance

99/100 | Water Performance

100/100 | Energy and Emissions Performance

55/100 | Waste Performance

87/100 | Quality of Life Performance



Category	Points Achieved/ Points Available
INTEGRATIVE PROCESS (IP)	0/5
NATURAL SYSTEMS AND ECOLOGY (NS)	4/9
TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE (TR)	8/15
WATER EFFICIENCY (WE)	5/11
ENERGY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (EN)	16/30
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES (MR)	4/10
QUALITY OF LIFE (QL)	16/20
INNOVATION (IN)	2/6
REGIONAL PRIORITY (RP)	0/4
TOTAL POINTS ACHIEVED	55/110

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INTEGRATIVE PROCESS

0/5

INTEGRATIVE PLANNING PROCESS



The Town of Davidson is a full-service town providing police and fire service, parks, public works, finance, affordable housing, sustainability and other community services rooted in their vision to remain a distinct, sustainable, and sovereign small town.

The five-member Board of Commissioners and Mayor serves as the town's legislative body, while the Town Manager is Davidson's chief administrative officer. There are 10 Town Departments, and the following were involved in the LEED for Cities process: Planning, Parks and Recreation (Sustainability), Affordable Housing and Equity, Public Works, Economic Development, Police, Fire, Communications, Project Management, and Administration.



NATURAL SYSTEMS AND ECOLOGY

4/9

ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE ACREAGE

The Town of Davidson has 853 acres of total green space, which translates to about 2,918 square feet (0.07 acres) of greenspace per resident. More than 70% of the residences are within a half-mile distance of these green spaces. Importantly, this calculation does not include neighborhood open spaces like the recently built Beaty Park near Davidson College, which includes many greenspaces throughout. Along with providing accessible green spaces, the Town of Davidson demonstrated a natural resource area of 1,531 square feet per person because of its conservation efforts.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

Davidson's landscape consists of gently rolling topography with a few key bluff overlooks and rock outcroppings. Public open spaces are optimally located to provide access for all residents to take in permanently protected areas. Preservation of soil quality is highlighted in their Comprehensive Plan and is further incentivized in the Davidson Planning Ordinance Section 7.2.1C which allows for open space requirements to be reduced by 1.5 acres for every acre of farmland, or acre of land with 75% prime agricultural soils included in a new development. These two conditions incentivize town planners to focus on finding ways to preserve fertile soils and take local farmers into consideration in planning developments.

The Town of Davidson boasts a total community tree canopy that provides the town with 44.98 acres of tree canopy coverage. The Davidson Signature Priority Map was created to further identify and prioritize particularly unique and ecologically critical areas.

Davidson lies within two watersheds and adopted policies which emphasize the practice of sustainable conservation and growth by preserving the critical watershed. The town also partners with Mecklenburg County and other organizations to coordinate planning strategies to protect watersheds and other sensitive areas.

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TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

8/15

TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE

The Town of Davidson achieved a transportation performance score of 95/100 based on the the measured value of 16.35 (2018) vehicles miles travelled per person per day.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Town of Davidson's Historic Preservation ordinance is administered by the Historic Preservation Commission, which consists of a minimum of seven members appointed by the Davidson Board of Commissioners. The ordinance is intended to designate, preserve, protect, enhance and perpetuate historical sites and structures. The commission ensures the inventory of historically eligible properties and sites, recommends applications of historic designation to the Board of Commissioners, and operates in its quasi-judicial capacity to grant Certificates of Appropriateness.

Particularly notable is their adopted ordinances on "Delay of Demolition" and "Demolition through Neglect". Both of these ordinances are leading strategies to prevent buildings from intentional neglect with demolition as the goals and protects quality building materials from entering landfills.



WATER EFFICIENCY

5/11

WATER PERFORMANCE

The Town of Davidson achieved a water performance score of 99/100 based on the daily per capital daily per capita water consumption value of 52.39 gallons (2019).

WATER ACESS AND QUALITY

Davidson is within Mecklenburg County, NC, and therefore has water provided through Charlotte Water which offers 100% coverage of all buildings within the boundary by public water supply and wastewater collection systems including centralized and decentralized systems. Not every parcel in Davidson is connected to public water and sewer systems owned and operated by Charlotte Water. Those who are not either have a septic system and private well or are provided service by a private utility.

Charlotte Water supplies Mecklenburg County with drinking water through three Water Treatment Plants. According to the annual Consumer Confidence Report, there was not a single violation within the year of 2019.

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ENERGY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS 16/30

ENERGY PERFORMANCE

The Town of Davidson achieved an energy performance score of 100/100 based on the total annual per capita scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors measured as 8.33 MT CO₂e (2019).

LOW CARBON ECONOMY

Davidson's primary electric power supplier is Duke Energy Carolinas and to a lesser amount Energy United. With a population of 12,735 people, Davidson's greenhouse gas intensity is 0.088 MT CO₂e per unit of measure.



MATERIALS AND RESOURCES 4/10

WASTE PERFORMANCE

The Town of Davidson achieved a waste performance score of 87/100 based on a municipal solid waste (MSW) generation rate of 0.29 tons per capita and a landfill diversion rate of 20% (2020).

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The state of North Carolina began requiring counties to develop and submit a ten-year solid waste management plan (SWMP) in 1997 and requires that the plan is updated every three years. The 2012 Mecklenburg County Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan represented the fifth update to the Plan and encompassed eight local governments: Mecklenburg County; the City of Charlotte; and the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Mint Hill, Matthews, and Pineville.

The Town of Davidson waste is taken to a processing facility owned by Mecklenburg County.



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QUALITY OF LIFE

16/20

QUALITY OF LIFE PERFORMANCE

The Town of Davidson achieved the quality of life performance score of 97/100 by tracking and measuring the key indicators of education, equity, prosperity, health and safety (2021):

- Population with high school degree: 97.2%
- Population with bachelor's degree: 73.8%
- Median household income: \$131,144
- Median gross rent as % of household income: 24.6%
- Unemployment Rate: 3.1%
- Gini coefficient: 0.4322
- Violent crime rate per capita per year: 0.004
- Median air quality index: 45
- Air quality days unhealthy for sensitive groups: 10



The Town of Davidson saw positive trend improvements including more people graduating with a high school degree and fewer people being unemployed.

HOUSING AND TRANSFORMATION AFFORDABILITY

The Town of Davidson partners with the Ada Jenkins Center on the homeless outreach program, which offers short-term relief as well as referrals to providers of long-term solutions. The town formally partners with the center to administer the town-adopted Rental Subsidy Policy which provides monthly rental relief to qualifying households in an effort ensure long-term, permanent housing to residents in need.

In 2022 the Town of Davidson updated its Affordable Housing Needs Assessment. The Town employed a robust methodology throughout the update, including dedicated community outreach and engagement; numerous stakeholder interviews with residents/users, non-profit service providers, professionals, and developers; real estate analysis; and a historical overview. The Needs Assessment guides Davidson's planning and decision-making to address the community's housing needs across income levels.



INNOVATION

2/6

INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE

The Town of Davidson demonstrated innovative performance by achieving the following:

1. Rural Area Plan:

In 2016, the Town of Davidson adopted the Rural Area Plan which was designed to shape future development in the town's extraterritorial jurisdiction, a roughly 3,800-acre rural landscape populated by distant subdivisions and a weak transportation network. The widely awarded plan has six main areas of focus: preserving Davidson's small-town character amidst development pressure, encouraging alternative means of active transportation, wise use of scarce land resources, creation of an environment which fosters diversity, managing access to public facilities and enhancing quality of life through architectural design. As a result of the plan, 50% of the original area of the plan was preserved as open space and connectivity was vastly improved with residents now being able to bike directly into downtown Davidson. The plan also established a scenic overlay district which codifies the prioritization of rural features desired by the community.

2. Utility Service and Annexation Criteria (USAC) Framework:

Like the Rural Area Plan, the overall goal of the USAC framework is to control the rapid pace of development in the Town of Davidson. The intent behind the framework is to provide predictability during the review process, support the implementation of adopted policy aims, and incentivize the incorporation of project features that exceed minimum standards and foster innovation.

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REGIONAL PRIORITY

0/4

The Town of Davidson did not pursue any Regional Priority credits.

The intent of this credit is to incentivise the achievement of credits that address geographically specific socio-economic and environmental priorities through USGBC's regional priority lookup tool or through locally identified regional priorities.

