

*Population Growth, Tax Base and Public Facilities*

Davidson is a desirable place to live. The quality of life is high, taxes are moderate, and public services are well provided. Growth should not be allowed to jeopardize these qualities.

Lack of sanitary sewer service is temporarily slowing growth in the Davidson area. The continued development of existing neighborhoods, such as River Run and McConnell will, however, provide for steady growth in population without any new approvals for development. The primary intent of the Land Plan is to maintain the quality of life as growth occurs by encouraging this growth in Davidson's image. Two population projections are given (Table 3): One estimates population increase over the next twenty years, and the other estimates the maximum population for Davidson and its existing sphere of influence.

As Davidson grows, efforts to control the cost of government must be based on land use since the majority of town revenue is tied to land values. The sustainable model of growth proposed in this plan will translate into economic sustainability for the town and its residents. Figures relating to tax base needs are provided in Table 4. The ability of the town to provide services at a reasonable cost will directly relate to the diversity of Davidson's tax base.

A major cause of community concern in recent months has been school overcrowding. Public schools, provided by Mecklenburg County and

the State, are in dire need of capital investment. In November, 1995 a school bond package was approved by Mecklenburg County voters which includes additions to Davidson Elementary School.

The current assignment area for Davidson Elementary School includes all of Davidson and parts of Cornelius and Huntersville. Development already approved will require substantial room in existing school buildings. A solution to school overcrowding will require a joint effort between Mecklenburg County and the three North Mecklenburg towns. The basic problem is that new development is occurring without adequate public school space to accommodate the new population.

Davidson should encourage and support countywide practices to ensure adequate public facilities for new development. Davidson cannot halt development unilaterally based on the lack of public school classroom space since Davidson does not provide these facilities. Students at Davidson's public schools come from throughout North Mecklenburg. Mecklenburg County and the entire Charlotte-Mecklenburg Region should together adopt strategies for managing growth.

*(Table 3)*

**Davidson Land Plan  
Population Projections**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population Estimate</u>
1995	5,000
2000	7,000
2005	8,650
2010	10,000
2015	12,000

(These estimates assume a consistent pace (20 students per yr.) of college enrollment growth and the availability of sanitary sewer by 2005.)

**Total Potential Population for Entire Existing Sphere of Influence with Maximum Build-Out**

**16,000-19,000**

The following options exist to make new development accountable for stress on public facilities:

- a. Impact Fees - A monetary charge imposed by local government on new development to recoup or offset a proportionate share of public capital costs required to accommodate such development with necessary public facilities.
- b. Concurrency - Requires that public facilities and services needed to support development be provided as the impact is felt by the community.
- c. Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance - Requires that development approval be granted based on a finding that sufficient infrastructure and public facilities exist or will be provided to serve the proposed development.
- d. Development Exactions - A range of requirements that a developer of property must meet to contribute to the cost of providing the public facilities that new development will require.

The following recommendations apply to population growth, tax base, and public services:

1. Establish managed growth to deal with population increase based upon the recommendations of the land plan.
2. Encourage a diverse tax base to provide public services at a reasonable cost.
3. Encourage and support countywide and regional efforts to manage growth and ensure adequate public facilities.
4. Pursue an adequate public facilities ordinance to be supported by a capital improvements program. These actions are intended to ensure the availability of adequate services and infrastructure to handle growth.
5. Establish a standing town committee to coordinate efforts to relieve school overcrowding. This committee will need to work with the Mecklenburg County School Board and other jurisdictions.

(Table 4)

### Davidson Land Plan Tax Base Needs

A survey of North Carolina towns with populations between 12,000 and 18,000 examined average town expenditures. This information helped project the following about Davidson:

	Year		
	2000	2005	2015
Population	7,000	8,650	12,000
Town Expenditures (Millions)	\$3.9	4.9	6.8
Tax Base (Millions)	\$446	560	782
Average Home Value To Support Public Spending (Thousands)	\$119	121	122

Housing is required to support a greater share of the burden under this scenario. This assumes that the existing distribution of tax base by land use remains the same. (Estimated at: 85% Residential - 9% Industrial - 6% Commercial)

## Davidson Land Plan Implementation Measures

1. Adopt Land Plan
  - Policy Guide
  - Regulating Plan
  - Code
2. Appoint the following standing town committees:
  - Schools
  - Affordable Housing
  - Transportation
  - Land Conservation
3. Work with other jurisdictions to ensure adequate public facilities to handle growth.
4. Draft a local adequate public facilities ordinance and capital improvement program to ensure the availability of services and infrastructure to handle growth.
5. Develop a "Township Ordinance" in accordance with the policies of the Land Plan.

This Land Plan provides the framework for all planning initiatives in Davidson. We should make vigorous efforts to cooperate with adjacent jurisdictions and the State of North Carolina to manage growth in the traditional American town form.