

Environmental Sustainability Committee

March 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Dan Fogel, Leslie Kepler (Chair), Mary Ann Sprung, Rich Sampson (Co-Chair), Trisha Knight, Diana Truman, Jeremy Shook

Members Absent: Dana Hicks

Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt (board liaison)

Staff: Bobby Williams, Assistant Town Manager (staff liaison)
Tracy Houk, Assistant Director – Parks and Recreation (staff liaison)

Chair, Leslie Kepler called the meeting to order (3:33).

Approval of March Minutes – Approved unanimous vote

Public comments, presentations, or requests.

- Leslie Willis, Town of Davidson Parks and Recreation Director
 - See attached presentation
 - Link on rating system mentioned in the presentation:
<https://www.usgbc.org/leed/rating-systems/leed-for-cities-communities>

Business items:

- Action Items: Ratify Previous Committee Actions
 - Election of Committee Chair (Leslie Kepler) and Co-Chair (Rich Sampson)
 - Motion made by Trisha Knight to officially elect Leslie Kepler for Chair and Rich Sampson for Co-Chair. Second - Jeremy Shook - - Approved unanimous vote.
 - 2024 Meeting Dates – 2nd Thursday of the month | 3:30pm
 - Attached with corrected dates
 - Motion made by Dan Fogel to approve meeting dates with correct dates. - - approved unanimous vote.
- Member Introductions – we have a couple of new members. Everyone went around introducing themselves, their backgrounds, and why they applied.
- Create Community Survey – looking at the ideas and goals from our March meeting one of the comments we saw multiple times was “Listen to Residents”
 - Purpose of the survey: Give an immediate chance to serve and listen to residents, what is important to them. Find out what they are interested in doing at home and/or what they are already doing at home to improve our townwide environmental sustainability. Can they help us identify quick wins that we as a town can support? Help prepare our residents for potential costs that may be coming down the line as we transition to a more sustainable town.
 - Where we can get involved: Huntersville Growers’ Market | Saturdays | 8:00am – share bags for people to use.
 - one of questions last time - Who are our peers or benchmarks - obviously we look at and talk to Davidson and Cornelius since they are our neighbors, but here are some we

typically look at, depending on nature of comparison:

- Apex
 - Chapel Hill
 - Cary
 - Kannapolis
 - Concord
 - Gastonia
 - Holly Springs
 - Look at doing a [Delphi Method](#) for the survey and include an educational tool for some of the programs or ideas so they can be more informed as they take the survey. One or two sentences with more information
 - Public support and engagement is critical when applying for grants – it also keeps the community involved and informed on upcoming projects
 - Adding value questions
 - Creating a website/page with more information for the community to refer to.
 - Please send town staff a list of questions – more discussion on the survey and creation of the survey will be discussed May meeting.
 - Instead of framing the questions into money, look at framing it into climate
 - We can wait to push out when we are ready
 - Maybe push out to a limited group before pushing out to the public.
- NRPA Sustainability in Practice – tabled to the May meeting.

Updates & Comments

- Update from staff: The town is looking into some grants/federal dollars – we are eligible for a grant of about \$125,000 and we delayed what we were going to ask for. The plan was for EV chargers at the new Town Hall, the plan is to install at least 6 EV charging stations. With the remaining dollars from the grant, we will look for a consultant to help us come up with a solid sustainability plan.
 - Tricia: Maybe look into an EV vehicle and only a couple of chargers.
- Update from Mary Ann Sprung: Would like to do a 20-minute presentation on carbon pricing, what it is all about, and the status of it in the country.
- Trisha Knight: Bite-sized information on Earth starting Earth Day then the survey will follow after.

Meeting adjourned – 5:01pm



Sustainability

Town of Davidson



Name
Title
Date

Road to Sustainability 2020

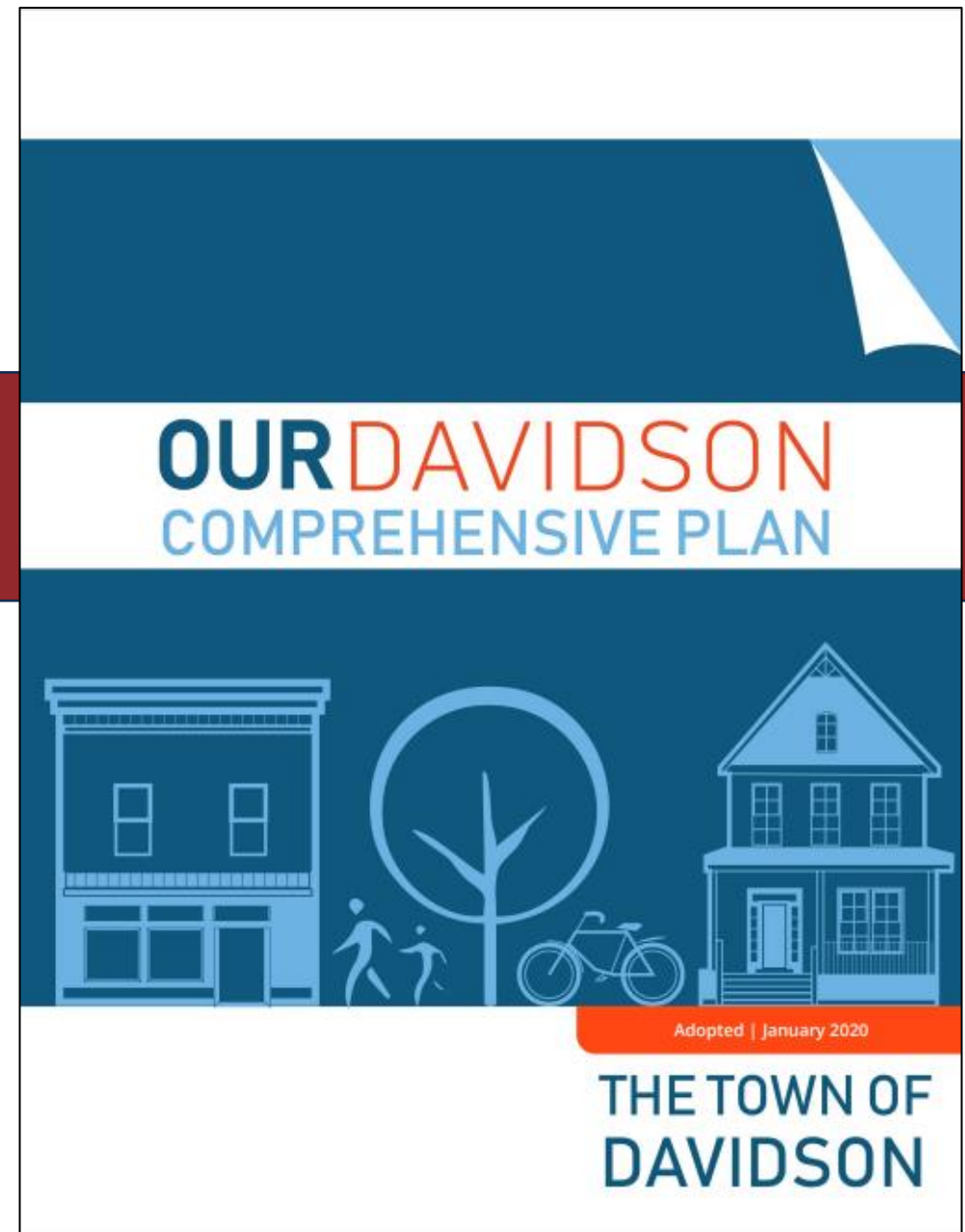
The Town adopted a Comprehensive Plan which included numerous sustainability and energy-related items.

THE VISION

*Davidson remains committed to controlling our own destiny
as a distinct, sustainable, and sovereign small town.*

*Our sense of community is rooted in
citizens who respect each other;
in racial and socioeconomic diversity;
and in pedestrian and bicycle orientation;
all in the presence of a small liberal arts college.*

Our history and character guide our future.



Road to Sustainability 2020-2022



The Davidson Board of Commissioners added sustainability as a priority item to their Strategic Plans.



The Davidson Board of Commissioners adopted a municipal operations goal of carbon neutrality by 2037 to coincide with the Town's bicentennial.

2022-2023 Town of Davidson Strategic Plan

Goal: E. Sustainability and Natural Assets

Description: Preserve Davidson's natural assets, and develop, implement, and actively encourage innovative solutions to environmental, energy, and climate- based challenges.

Priority Strategies:

1. Create tree canopy master plan
2. Create a Climate Action, Conservation and Sustainability plan to include developing a scope of work for potential future sustainability director
3. Research and capitalize on available grant opportunities to fund position and programs

Other Strategies:

- Coordinate and partner with nonprofits on land preservation opportunities and support Mecklenburg County's efforts on farmland preservation in Davidson and its ETJ
- Develop a sustainability education program to bring together board and community
- Identify and pursue ways for Town of Davidson to model desired behavior supportive of improved sustainability and environmental awareness

Road to Sustainability 2021

Sustainability Committee formed

Sustainability Framework adopted

Adopted April 27, 2021



SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

Davidson will strive to create and maintain a vibrant, equitable community and economy while protecting the natural environment for generations to come.

The town will cultivate a community ethic of sustainability through a dedicated framework including:

PRIORITY AREAS	ACTION ITEMS
1. Education & Engagement Cultivating an ethic of responsibility and partnership	a. Implement strategic website development b. Explore communications campaign c. Collaborate with state, regional, and local partners G 5.4
2. Municipal Operations Reviewing, updating, and benchmarking municipal operations	a. Update building, fleet, procurement, and operations standards G 2.3 * b. Undertake benchmarking * G 5.1
3. Green-Buildings & Infrastructure Enhancing the community's building, infrastructure, and natural environment standards	a. Support renewable energy initiatives and energy efficiency improvements (ex. solar, lighting, weatherization) * G 2.3 b. Support water quality initiatives and improve stormwater/rainwater management * G 2.3 c. Enhance workforce/affordable housing * G 5.2 d. Review community contaminant policies/progress (ex. pesticides, asbestos)
4. Mobility Supporting Mobility Plan implementation efforts	a. Analyze EV infrastructure location and funding opportunities * G 3.4 b. Improve multi-modal connectivity throughout Davidson via visible projects G 3.1-3.3
5. Ongoing & Long-term Priorities Assessing progress and planning for upcoming initiatives	a. Evaluate and prioritize Comprehensive Plan recommendations and other publicly vetted targets b. Assess and implement environmental and public health strategies; land/farmland conservation efforts; and zero waste initiatives c. Reduce municipal operations GHG emissions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2037 and develop a community-wide climate action plan G 5.1, 2.3

* Represents items prioritized for budget consideration FY 2021; [G X.X](#) Represents Comprehensive Plan Goal

For more information about the Town of Davidson's Sustainability Initiative, visit:

www.townofdavidson.org/sustainability

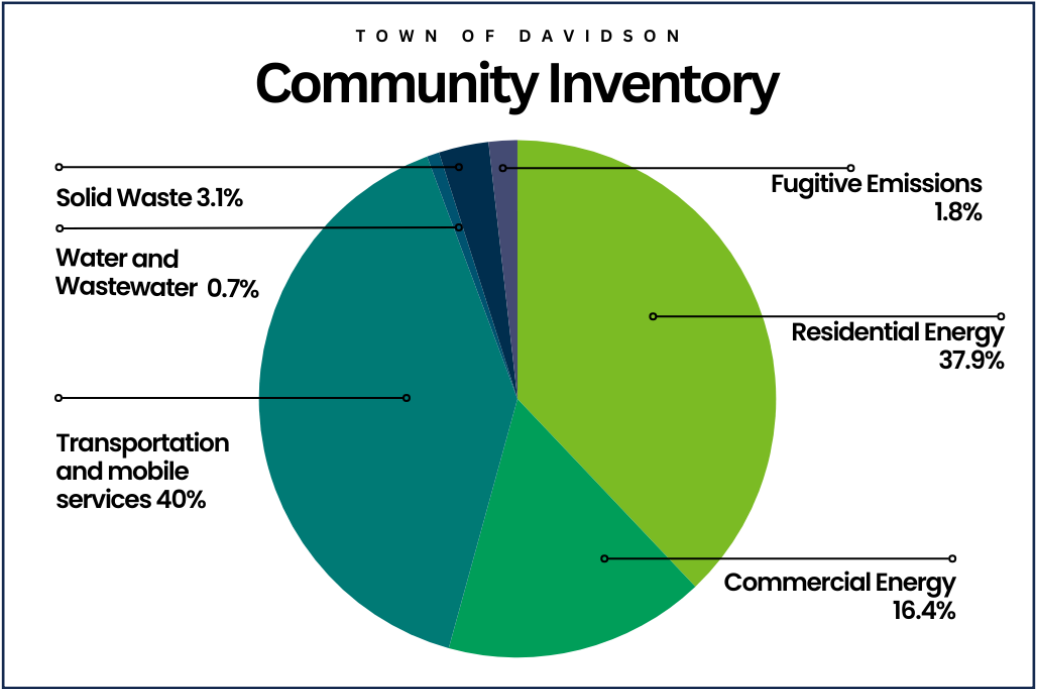
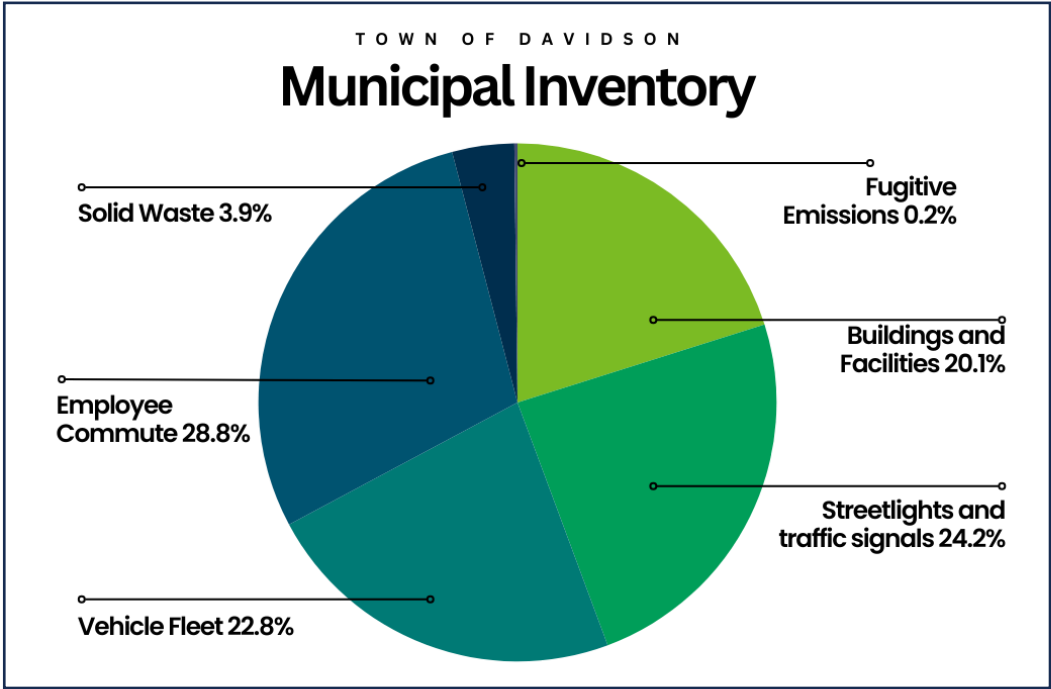
Road to Sustainability 2023

To reduce emissions and reach the goal of carbon neutrality, a plan was needed. The Town worked with Blue Strike Environmental to develop a Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP provides a roadmap of goals, strategies, and actionable steps to drive emission reductions and reach the 2037 municipal carbon neutrality goal.



Road to Sustainability 2023

The town in conducted a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for municipal operations and a protocol-compliant community-wide inventory, with 2019 as the benchmark year for each. This was completed in partnership with Davidson College.



Road to Sustainability

2023-2024

2023 November	The Town hired a Sustainability Manager to oversee the implementation of the CAP and other sustainability initiatives
2024 March	Adoption of CAP expected
2024 April	Expect to begin implementation of CAP



Current Sustainability Initiatives:

- Davidson Composts Program – in collaboration with Crown Town Compost
- Preparing for solar panels to be added to Town Hall roof
- Updating street lighting to LED
- LEED for Cities Certification Application submitted
- Bee City USA community
- Tree City community
- Tree planting with Davidson Lands Conservancy
- Arbor Day & Earth Day events

Sustainability Accomplishments To-Date



- Educational native and pollinator garden installations at Beaty Park
- Tree Canopy Analysis completed
- **Tree-Ordinance:** Revamped in 2019, this data-driven effort projected increases in canopy coverage and preservation requirements by 86% and 56%, respectively, while creating a Town Arborist position to engage community members with expertise and best practices.



- Public Works purchased all-electric landscape equipment for the McEver Ballfields including the town's first electric ride-on mower
- The Davidson Police Department purchased an electric pickup truck
- Participation in the Duke Energy Park and Plug Pilot Program for two public electric vehicle charging stations.
- Public Works cleaner diesel heavy-duty truck



- **General Planning Principles:** These foundational statements originated in the early 2000's and underscore Davidson's commitment to building a walkable, compact community that values preservation, environmental stewardship and affords its residents a variety of dwelling, transportation, and cultural options.
- **Rural Area Plan:** Adopted in 2016 after extensive public engagement, this plan and its corresponding ordinance changes enable up to 65% of the existing rural area to be protected as publicly-accessible open space at build-out – greater than 2,000 acres.
- **Watershed Ordinance:** Updated in 2017, these ordinance changes established and revised targeted standards to maintain high water quality while accommodating desired infill development in line with the town's aims.

Sustainability Looking Ahead

MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS



Focus on reducing municipal greenhouse gas emissions to meet carbon neutrality goals; including, but not limited to:

- Transitioning Town fleet and equipment to cleaner alternatives
- Improving efficiency of Town buildings and adoption of renewable energy
- Finish updating street lighting to LED
- Reducing waste and improving waste diversion

COMMUNITY-WIDE



Focus on reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions; including, but not limited to:

- Creating a walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly town
- Expanding EV infrastructure
- Encouraging energy efficiency in homes and buildings as well as renewable energy adoption
- Continue to expand on programs such as Davidson Composts to reduce and divert waste in the community away from landfills

Questions?



Environmental Sustainability Committee

2024 MEETING DATES

- March 14
- April 11
- May 9
- June 13
- July 11
- August 15
- September 12
- October 10
- November 14
- December 14

Adopted April 11, 2024