

DAVIDSON PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN

Public Workshop #1 | Summary of Input

MEETING OVERVIEW

Date: March 9, 2017

Time: 6:00 - 7:30pm

Location: Davidson College Presbyterian Church's Congregation House - 218 Concord Road

A brief presentation of the project was presented to share the history and timeline. Next the lead consultants, Creech & Associates and Stantec, led attendees through a series of station exercises designed to collect direct feedback from citizens on several issues. Stations consisted of large boards and table maps of information with a facilitator at each station. The following are the topics covered by each station:

- Things that make Davidson great
- Architectural character and scale
- Town hall site planning options
- Parking & Mobility
- Outdoor Civic Space Needs (including Davidson Farmer's Market)
- Civic Space Needs within Town Hall

GENERAL TAKEAWAYS

- Attendance was very impressive; 75+ participants arrived early and seemed eager
- Overall, there was much enthusiasm and positive discussion among participants
- Citizens were highly engaged and offered several original ideas and comments
- The venue worked very well for this meeting and the meeting ran smoothly



PASSPORT

In an effort to show appreciation to citizens for attending the workshop and providing valuable input, the team designed a “passport” and distributed one to each participant upon entry to the workshop. The passport contained a small map of the study area for reference and a list of stations. Attendees were instructed to check off each station in the list after visiting and return the passport to the team at the end of the meeting. One passport was drawn randomly after the meeting and one participant won a \$25 gift card to the Village Store.



STATION #1: WHAT MAKES DAVIDSON GREAT?

Participants were asked to vote for their favorite images of what makes Davidson great.

Top vote getters

- Green open space/parks
- Greenways and trails
- The Farmer's Market
- Plazas/small public gathering places

Other notable selections

- Architecture and buildings
- Main Street
- The Town Green/larger public gathering spaces
- Outdoor dining

Downtown shops and restaurants, public art, and trees, flowers and vegetation collected the lowest number of votes, but still garnered more than 20 votes each.

Notable suggestions by participants

- Small town feel
- Walkability
- Neighbors/people/community
- Historic

What could be done to make it better?

- More parks
- More retail
- More economic diversity



TAKEAWAYS

Participants selected the Farmer's Market and parks and recreational elements the most, those items getting votes near 40 and above. Other options weren't far behind, some getting votes in the low or mid 30s, but elements of the built environment fell generally in the middle of the pack, with shops, art and vegetation pulling up the rear.

STATION #2: ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER & SCALE



Participants were shown a set of images depicting architectural character elements and asked to select that which they would like to see in a new Town Hall.



Top vote getters

- Pedestrian pathways
- Retail
- Columns
- Arches
- Base detail



Examples of Traditional Civic Buildings Around North Carolina

Overall, participants indicated that they **did not** think that architectural elements in the examples shown should be seen in a new Town Hall.



Other results/comments to note

- The architectural character of the Flatiron building received mixed votes
- Contemporary architectural character received the most negative votes
- Several comments alluded to ensuring that the design does not look like so many new civic buildings in the region (ex. Huntersville Town Hall)

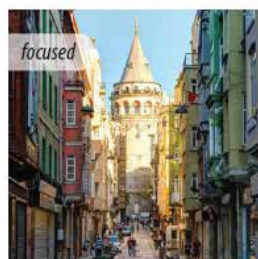
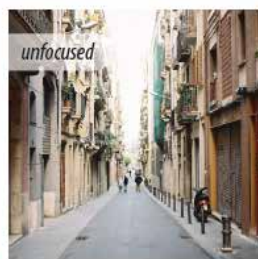
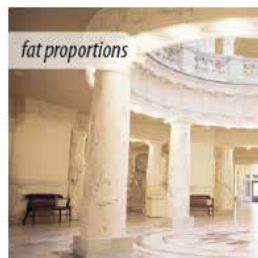
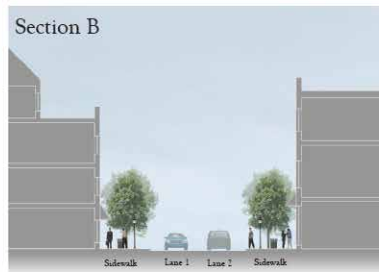
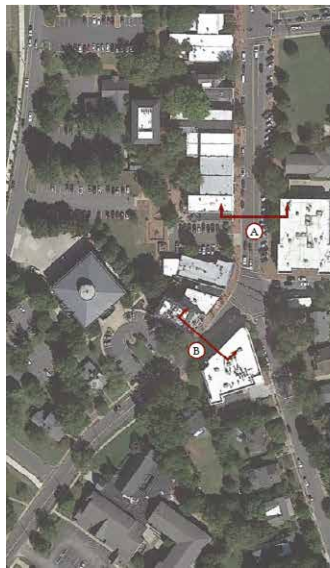


TAKEAWAYS

Results were polarized toward traditional architecture versus contemporary. However, none of the precedent images of traditional civic buildings in NC were viewed favorably. Further investigation is necessary to determine the appropriate style of traditional design that the citizens of Davidson desire.

STATION #2A: ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER & SCALE

Predominately for educational purposes, this board walked participants through the concepts of varying scales, from the detailed human scale, to the building, to the urban scale. The following are some images from that board.



STATION #3: TOWN HALL SITE PLANNING OPTIONS



Attendees had the opportunity to work with scaled models of the site at a table exercise. A 3D printer was used to make small models of existing and proposed buildings so that participants could move buildings around the site and test out options themselves. Additionally, a presentation board showed three site plan options with opportunities and challenges for each. Citizens voted on their favorite option and left comments on sticky notes.



Notable results and comments

- Option 1 **did not** receive any votes, while Option 3 received the most followed by Option 2
- Several comments suggested avoiding disturbing the existing older houses along Main Street just south and southwest of Town Hall
- Several other comments suggested acquiring the land and preserving, but relocating those houses elsewhere in Davidson
- Many participants felt that none of the options presented showed clearly where the Farmer's Market would fit in

Separate Town Hall from Public Safety

- Several comments recommended moving Police and Fire operations out of downtown to a new building
- A few comments suggested maintaining Police on site, but moving Fire elsewhere in the community



TAKEAWAYS

- The older houses adjacent to Town Hall are of significant value to the community and strategies for preservation, relocation or designing around them should be evaluated
- Option 1 will no longer be evaluated as a viable option
- Further study and exploration of Options 2 and 3 is necessary

STATION #3: TOWN HALL SITE PLANNING OPTIONS (CONTINUED)

Option 1 0 votes

Opportunities

- Fire station remains operational
- Urban green fronting Town Hall
- New Town Hall establishes prominent frontage on Main Street

Challenges

- Parking lot removed from Main Street
- Opportunities to expand in the future are limited
- Expansion of existing building requires complete change of façade and roof



Option 2 12 votes

Opportunities

- Fire station remains mostly operational
- Civic green between buildings
- New 100 year Town Hall building predominately replaces older, less functional one

Challenges

- Parking lot removed from Main Street
- Removal of remaining portion of old Town Hall (long term)
- Frontage design on Main Street will require active uses



Option 3

Top selection at 16 votes

Opportunities

- Fire station remains operational
- Parking lot maintained on Main Street, but reconfigured as plaza
- New Town Hall establishes civic prominence on corner of site
- Public parking in structured deck

Challenges

- Land acquisition
- Displacing early 1900s-era house
- More physically separated from other Town Hall buildings
- Additional cost of deck
- Uncertain future demand for parking to justify construction of deck
- Future adaptive reuse of deck



STATION #4: PARKING AND MOBILITY



Executive summary details from the 2011 parking study were shared with participants as well as general details on the costs of surface parking versus structured parking. Attendees were asked to respond to a few questions as well:

Parking

- Where is the greatest parking need in downtown?
Generally near Summit Coffee and Town Hall
- Do we need a parking deck downtown?
Yes = 21; No = 6
- Would you park in a deck downtown?
Yes = 16; No = 2
- Would you pay to park in a deck downtown?
Yes = 7; No = 10



Mobility

- Which mode do you most often use to get downtown?
Walk = 36; Personal car = 34; Bike = 14
- What could we do to encourage you to come downtown without your car?
Implement a downtown/neighborhoods shuttle
Increase protected bike facilities into downtown
Increase greenways into downtown



TAKEAWAYS

- Participants seemed OK with the idea of a parking deck, but questioned whether one is necessary
- They seemed generally opposed to paying to park in a deck
- Several comments suggested thoroughly evaluating other options before looking further at building a deck
- Regarding mobility, several comments suggested a shuttle system that connected surrounding neighborhoods to downtown
- If the system were of high quality and service were frequent enough, many citizens commented that it might be a more convenient option to travel downtown than the personal car

STATION #5: OUTDOOR CIVIC SPACE NEEDS

In order to gather input to inform the planning of outdoor spaces around the public facility buildings, participants were asked which outdoor civic elements they would like to see more of in Davidson. A range of typologies were illustrated.



Top selections from each category

Shared Space

- Pocket park
- Biergarten (outdoor seating/flexible space)
- Square



Seating

- Benches
- Movable seating



Program Elements

- Farmer's Market
- Playgrounds



Natural Elements

- Flower beds
- Sculptural (involving water)



Pavilions

- Canopy
- Colonnade

Notable suggested elements

- Gardens near public facilities (ex. Town Hall)
- Play areas for older kids (courts, exercise equipment)
- Public Wi-Fi in downtown



Art

- Local
- Embedded



TAKEAWAYS

- The Farmer's Market received the most votes of any category by almost double
- The next most favored elements were Pocket park, Flower beds and Playgrounds

STATION #5: OUTDOOR CIVIC SPACE NEEDS



To inform the planning of the interior civic spaces of the public facility buildings, participants were asked which indoor civic elements they would like to see more of in a new Town Hall. A range of typologies were illustrated.

Top selections *(by overwhelming majority)*



Informal Board Room



Flexible Community Room



Gallery



Daylight & Atrium

Notable suggestions

- “Community room must have tech monitors, Wi-Fi, touch screens, wireless, video adapters” – how the facility functions is more important than how it looks



TAKEAWAYS

- With such overwhelming majority in the selected options, more understanding is needed as to why citizens selected one option so heavily over other options. Other stations showed more evenly dispersed selections.