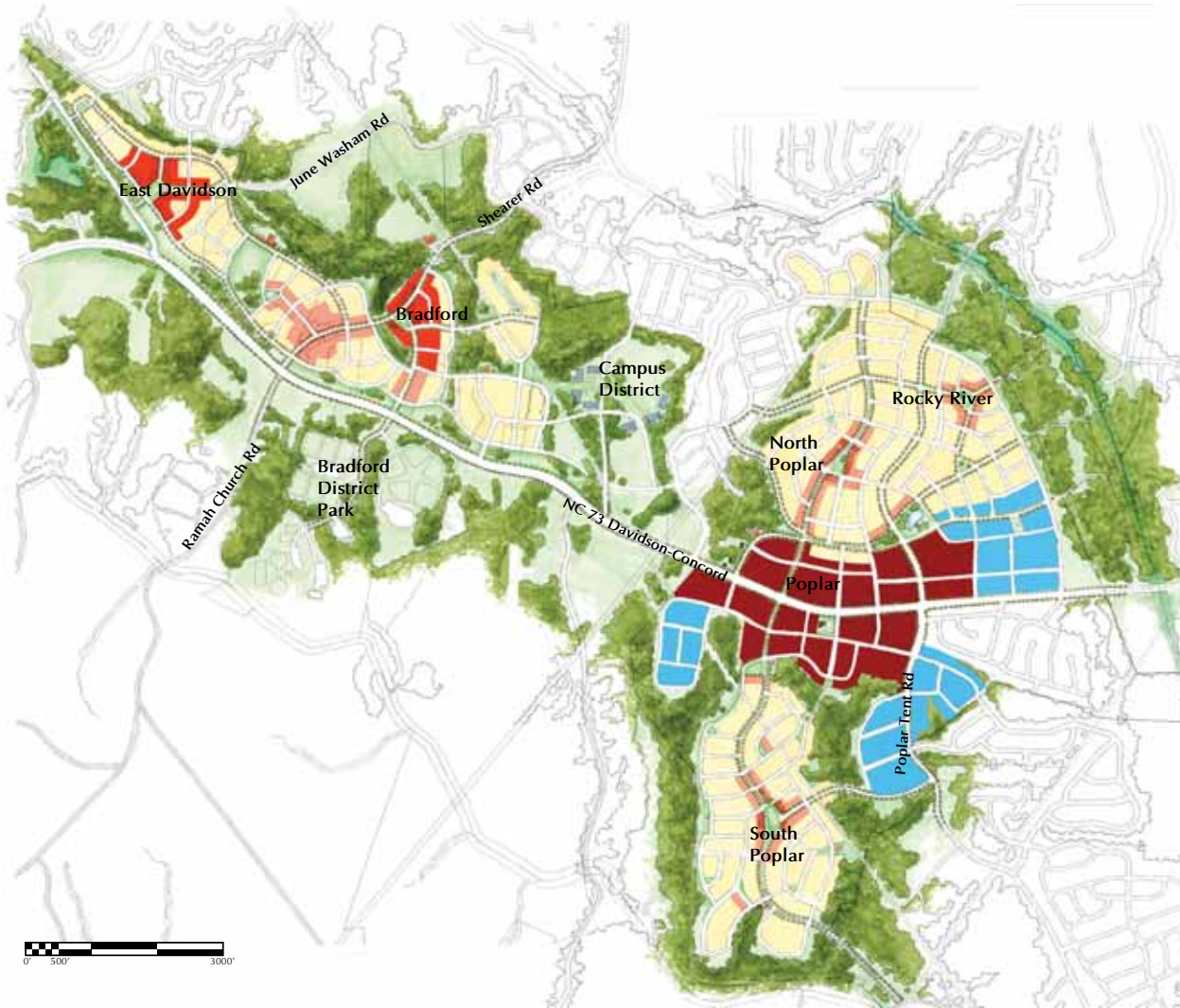


Overview of the Plan

4



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This Master Plan projects an approximate 30-year hypothetical build-out, as well as provides a framework of best planning practices. The intent is to provide direction for the immediate development projects as well as provide guidance for the long-term maturity of the area. Near term development must be planned and developed with respect for a long term vision.

The hypothetical build-out illustrates how the land may be developed over the course of several decades. It depicts the location and size of neighborhoods and neighborhood centers with a mixture of uses, the scale of development, the recommended network of streets, and the preferred location, types and sizes of open spaces. The Master Plan takes into account current ownership, so that if or when parcels are developed, a cohesive pattern of neighborhoods, streets and open spaces is possible.

The Master Plan also acknowledges that in the long term there could be unforeseen development dynamics, changes in land-use policy and market forces that may modify the proposed plan. The planning framework provides direction so that as the plan evolves in consideration of these dynamics; the resulting development will still accomplish the same goals. The objective is to follow the framework so as to ensure suitable development is created.

The Building Blocks of Centers, Neighborhoods and Network

Most post-war development patterns separate stores, offices, and residences into disparate single-use zones; creating a reliance on the car for the most basic daily needs and services. From a sustainable design and transportation standpoint, part of the solution to creating livable communities and relieving the day-to-day reliance on NC 73 is through a coordinated urban design, land use and transportation approach. This Plan encourages the development of numerous centers as places of concentrated employment, with housing nearby and accessibility to daily needs and services in a walkable environment. Neighborhoods are proposed at a size and scale that is understandable and meaningful for people, in a framework that allows the neighborhoods to grow over time and evolve. The proposed network of streets creates multiple ways to move from one destination to another.

This section provides an overview of the Plan. Further details are provided in subsequent chapters.

Organization of the Master Plan

A number of key considerations contribute to the overall physical organization of the plan:

- A series of recognizable and walkable neighborhoods;
- Neighborhood Centers of higher density and mixed-use;
- A regional Central Business District for creating jobs and revenues;
- A preserved greenbelt and formalized open space system;
- Prominent and key locations reserved for civic buildings;
- Special Districts for unique business opportunities; and,
- A network of streets to enable efficient traffic dispersion;

Neighborhoods, Centers, and Districts:

The Plan includes a series of Neighborhoods, a Central Business District and Special Districts. Each is walkable, uniquely identifiable and includes uses and building types appropriate to its location, function, and context.

Neighborhoods are strategically located and organized within the Plan with respect for access, property ownership, walkability, ideal size, topography, and environment. Neighborhoods include a mix of housing types and choices at varying price ranges; higher density and mixed-use at the center and lower density housing towards the edge. The edge of a neighborhood should be an approximate 5-minute walk to its center, suggesting an ideal size of 150 to 200 acres.

Neighborhood Centers are strategically located at important intersections to maximize access, visibility and economic viability. These centers should include a range of commercial uses within walking distance of housing, serving the neighborhood primarily, but also serving existing, adjacent residential areas.

A single, prominent employment center, or Central Business District, is located at the intersection of Poplar Tent and NC 73. This center serves as the major employment and revenue-generating component for the jurisdictions. Poplar Center is strategically located where access, visibility, proximity to housing and a transportation network is most prominent. The greenbelt system weaves its way into the center, providing important access to a regional trail and biking system.

Special Districts include the Campus District and the Research & Development Districts. The Campus District is intended for a user who will maintain the land, while developing with limited impact on the land and view sheds. The Research & Development Districts are set up in locations for users that need a light industrial space.

Open Space:

The open space network includes a greenbelt system that preserves environmentally sensitive land, enables wildlife migration, provides access to a regional trail system, and connects important forest and ecosystems. Moreover, the greenbelt defines the physical and visual edges of the neighborhoods and districts, giving them identity while serving as the "connective tissue" that enables neighborhoods, centers, and districts to be perceived and function as a comprehensive and connected system. Parks and recreation activities occur within the greenbelt.

The open space system includes greens, squares and plazas, each located and prescribed in the plan appropriate to its context. These too are an important part of the Master Plan, provide added value to the neighborhoods, centers and districts, and are connected to the greenbelt.

Civic Buildings:

Civic buildings include schools, churches, museums, arts and cultural buildings, libraries and similar. The plan does not specifically quantify the need for these but does, however, reserve important locations for civic buildings as they may be desirable and needed in the future.

Schools should be located at the neighborhood edge, within the greenbelt, and situated between multiple neighborhoods to maximize accessibility and walkability. Other civic buildings can be located within centers - at prominent intersections and sites, at high points of land, within greens and squares - or within the greenbelt. Civic buildings add identity and value to neighborhoods and centers and, when placed at prominent and visible locations, become identifiable "markers" within the landscape, further helping to provide visual connectivity from place to place.

Network of Streets:

The Master Plan includes a network of streets of various types and function. The network is carefully organized to maximize connectivity and ensure an efficient dispersion of traffic. The street network connects neighborhoods, centers and open space.

Centers & Ten Minute Walks



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The radius of each circle is approximately equal to a five minute walk, one-quarter mile or 1,300 feet.

The Design of NC 73

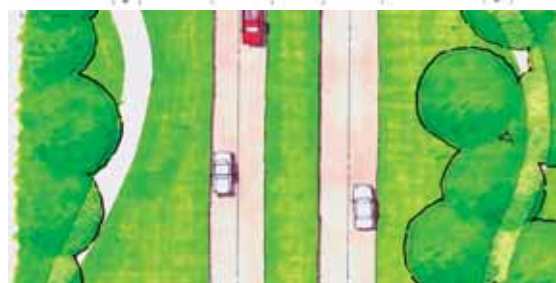
NC 73 is currently a two-lane highway, but is proposed as a four-lane road with signalized intersections at key locations. During the charrette, participants expressed an interest in the Urban Boulevard street type. This street type is planned to occur at Poplar Center, with frontage roads that provide slower-paced, local circulation along the edge of the larger, mostly through-traffic, four-lane road. Planted medians separate the frontage road from the four lanes, providing a unique opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle movement

The Boulevard



along a safe, linear park. This park transitions into pathways that meander along the edge of NC 73 from the edge of Poplar Center west to Davidson-Concord Road. This section is a Parkway, with a planted median dividing opposing flow of traffic. Along this Parkway, north of NC 73, is a series of parallel roads that offers drivers a local alternative to NC 73.

The Parkway



The Centers

Central Business District: Poplar Center is the scale and density of a Central Business District with two- to six-story buildings. Located at the intersection of NC 73 and Poplar Tent Road, it is targeted as a regional job center, a true mixed-use environment which can potentially accommodate up to x,xxx,xxx square feet of office.

Neighborhood Centers: Two smaller Neighborhood Centers are located in close proximity to Poplar Center, with a more modest scale, providing neighborhood services and some opportunities for employment.



The East Davidson Center is at the intersection of NC 73 and Davidson-Concord Road.



The Bradford Center is at the proposed extension of Shearer Road.

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The Neighborhoods

D The Rocky River Neighborhood is adjacent to the Rocky River and Greenway, with streets oriented towards the water. The adjacent greenway and a neighborhood green space offer exceptional open space amenities for the neighborhood.

E The North Poplar and South Poplar Neighborhoods each have a neighborhood green and have the benefit of being within walking distance of the more urban Poplar Center.



Special Districts

G The Corporate Campus/Retreat District is located on the White/Helms properties. The intent is to maintain the exceptional landscape, historic buildings and cultural resources by locating a user which prefers a cloistered, natural environment and lessen the impact on the land. This can be a high-end corporate or research campus built under LEED certified green building standards.

H Research & Development District areas may have single-use, one-story, and flex-office buildings as well as mixed-use buildings up to 6 stories tall, as permitted in the Town Center. These optional Research & Development Districts are located in areas that do hinder the necessary network of streets and can be buffered from adjacent development.



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Open Spaces

A variety of open spaces are provided. They include greenways, trails, greens and preserved lands. Highlights include:

- The NC 73 Greenway: The side medians, which are part of the Boulevard at Poplar Center, serve as linear parks. Along the Parkway portion of NC 73, parallel walking and biking trails are provided.
- The Rocky River Greenway is proposed adjacent to the river. This edge is undevelopable because of flood criteria. This edge creates an opportunity for a publicly accessible waterfront, as a centerpiece of a larger greenway system.
- The Neighborhoods each have a central green and smaller greens are located throughout.

View Sheds

View sheds are created and preserved through a variety of ways:

- Environmentally Preserved Lands maintain a view shed.
- Bradford District Park provides structured play fields, adjacent to the environmentally preserved land, maintaining a green edge on the south side of NC 73.
- A special Campus District is proposed to preserve the land and view shed.
- Development along the north side of NC 73 would be nestled away from the road.