



# TOWN OF MAYODAN

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

210 W. MAIN STREET • MAYODAN, N.C. 27027 • (336) 427-0241 FAX (336) 427-7592  
[mbrandt@townofmayodan.com](mailto:mbrandt@townofmayodan.com) • [www.townofmayodan.com](http://www.townofmayodan.com)

Final Report for NC Small Town Economic Prosperity Implementation Grant  
(NC Rural Center/ NC Dept. Commercial Rural Development)

Recipient: Town of Mayodan Grant# 2012-242-60401-107

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Reported By: Michael Brandt, Town Manager  
(336) 427-0241  
[mbrandt@townofmayodan.com](mailto:mbrandt@townofmayodan.com)

## **Program Summary:**

Mayodan entered the STEP program in June 2012, and began working with an NC STEP coach to create a long term economic development strategic plan and implementation strategy for the town. The plan's goals are to create conditions and activities that will ultimately result in job and wealth creation, improved standard of living and quality of life for the community's residents, and additional public and private investments into the town and vicinity.

The planning process spanned approximately 15 months. After drafting a common mission statement, the STEP Leadership Team, comprised of a cross section of Mayodan's area citizens, developed its plan focusing on four broad strategies with multiple projects under each strategy. [One strategy is a joint strategy with the Town of Madison.] As participants in the STEP program, the community received up to \$12,500 in planning funds and up to \$73,000 to implement its initial projects.

The Leadership Team developed four broad strategies and a number of projects to implement those strategies as part of the implementation period (May 2014 – December 2015).

## **Achievement of Project Goals:**

*Strategy #1: Create a Marketing Plan and Mayodan Brand.*

This strategy seeks to incorporate the positive attributes into a Mayodan Brand that is easily understood and recognizable. This brand will become part of a marketing plan that will be used to change the public perception of Mayodan and will be used in business and industry recruitment, new resident recruitment, and to support town appearance projects. The resulting marketing plan will provide consistent visual components along with uniform messaging and will be implemented across all media formats; print, broadcast, electronic, and social.

The Town solicited consultants to aid in the development of a new brand and to develop and implement a marketing plan. King's English LLC, from Greensboro, was selected. Working with the Branding and Marketing sub-committee, King's English has developed a new logo, developed a

marketing plan, and has helped developed marketing materials, including a new website still under development. Appendix #1 includes examples of this work.

The new Town logo has received very positive comments from both citizens and professionals in marketing and tourism development. The Town used social media and online voting tools to help develop the logo and tag line.

Once the logo and marketing plan was finalized the Town began a marketing campaign that has included advertisements in Rockingham County's Tourism & Economic Development publication *Our Town Magazine*, and Rockingham County Chamber of Commerce publication *Explore Rockingham County*. In addition, three thousand rack cards were produced and distributed to visitor centers, businesses, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Marketing implementation also includes a new website for the Town that is more up-to-date and will provide more links to economic development opportunities in and around Mayodan.

*Strategy #2: Implement a Downtown Beautification and Physical Improvements Program as an Attraction Tool.*

This strategy seeks to have meaningful and sustainable property improvements made in Mayodan by improving communications among and between property owners, business owners, town government officials, and related citizens organizations; providing additional resources to property owners and business owners; and utilizing the historic aspect of key properties to improve the appearance and accessibility of Mayodan and to attract additional businesses, customers, and residents.

A number of specific strategies were identified: Implementation of NC Department of Commerce Small Town Main Street Program; Façade Improvement Grants; Mayodan Hotel Marketing Assistance; Creation of a Downtown National Register Historic District; Develop better Pedestrian Access.

The Town was accepted in the Small Town Main Street Program in October 2014. Staff from NC Department of Commerce worked with the Downtown Mayodan Merchants Association to develop a work plan that includes organizational structure, promotions, historic preservation, and economic restructuring. Since beginning the program there has been a marked increase in interest in downtown development. Eight new businesses have opened or are planning on opening (however, two have closed). One property has been purchased, and there has been interest in other properties. The Downtown Mayodan Merchants Association has held a series of events including "cruise-ins", "touch-a-truck", "Christmas Strolls", and a very successful temporary public art program called "Hayodan". This is a one-of-a-kind event where businesses and community groups decorate large hay bales which are placed around the community. Participation grew during the first year from 12 to 24 hay bales in the two months they were on display. In the second year participation grew from 30 to over 40 participants. Press coverage included both television, print media, and social media (Facebook). Images of the hay bales were seen by thousands- bringing attention to Mayodan and the downtown businesses. Beautification projects included flower basket installation, new decorative street signs and trash receptacles. See Appendix #2 for examples.

Façade Improvement grants were made to nine downtown property owners to improve the visual appeal of downtown. Grants were available for up to \$1,000 for each property. Improvements included new awnings for five buildings, the removal of two old metal awnings, repairs to gutters and

windows, and painting various buildings. The grant invested almost \$7,500, which resulted in over \$16,000 worth of improvements. As with the downtown events, the façade improvements have brought more interest downtown, and property owners have requested that the Town fund another round of Façade Improvement grants next fiscal year. Examples of the work accomplished is in Appendix #3.

Mayodan does not have any significant over-night accommodations. This hampers our efforts for tourism and over-night events. The Town initially invested \$1,500 of STEP funding to help market the community to hoteliers. Specifically, a significant three-story former “Mayodan Hotel” was targeted for conversion to a Bed & Breakfast Inn. Fortunately, Rockingham County Tourism and Economic Development has actively participated in seeking a developer to consider the community for a new hotel property. This has included developing a hotel marketing plan (currently being updated). In addition, a community volunteer has developed a package of information specifically for the former “Mayodan Hotel” and the property is being marketed by Preservation NC. While so far there has not been a successful sale or development of a hotel, interest is growing, especially for the old structure due to the re-institution of the state historic tax credits for commercial development. The funds provided for this project were not needed and redistributed into the Façade Grant Program (above). See Appendix #4 for materials.

The Town contracted with hwmPreservation to develop an application for a downtown National Register Historic District. This project is ongoing, a final public hearing will occur in February, 2016, and the State Historic Preservation Office will recommend approval or denial of the application later in February. The study found that downtown Mayodan has many structures that are intact and are historically significant in that they represent a period of commercial development and building technics typical of the 1920s- the post WW II period. Establishment of the district will allow property owners to take advantage of state and federal historic preservation tax credits and allow the Town to market itself as “historic” – an important component to heritage tourism. See Appendix 4.

The Town of Mayodan has two public parking lots that are immediately adjacent to each other, except that they are on two different levels. The Leadership Team determined that connecting these two parking lots with a ramp or steps would enhance pedestrian access downtown. However, after receiving quotes for the project that were 3 times the available funds the Team determined that those funds would be better spent as part of the Main Street Program improvements. Therefore this strategy was abandoned for now. The Town will consider this capital project in the future.

*Strategy #3: Develop Natural Resources for Residents and Visitors alike. Joint Strategy with Town of Madison.*

This strategy seeks to develop recreational environmental opportunities and create new ones, in order to: improve health and quality of life for people of all ages; attract new residents, industry, and tourists while helping existing businesses; create more environmental and tourist oriented jobs; and strengthen our economy.

Mayodan partnered with the Mayo River State Park to develop a river access on property owned by the Mayo River State Park. Funding provided by the grant was matched with State Park funding to develop a parking lot, boat landing, and appropriate signage. The river access will be the first public access point on the lower Mayo River and allow non-motorized boats to enter the river in an area that has not been accessible before. This opens the area to fishing, floating, and paddling for both local residents and visitors.

Farris Memorial Park is a 270 acre park owned by Mayodan. While there are walking trails and other recreational facilities, a large portion of the park is generally undeveloped. Grant funding from STEP was combined with grants provided by the Reidsville Area Foundation (\$12,500) and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust (\$39,800) to develop the first mountain bike trail in Rockingham County. The trail is 3 miles long and has attracted both local riders and regional interest. The trail is being considered for a state-wide High School Mountain Bike competition in the spring of 2017. The local high school has started a mountain bike club, and efforts are underway to develop the trail further using local workforce development participants.

The towns of Mayodan and Madison have formed a Rivers and Trails Committee made up of community members from both towns. The Dan River Basin Association, a local river advocacy group, has dedicated staff resources to guide the committee in their work to identify and plan for future river access points and trails in western Rockingham County. This is significant due to a grant that was awarded by the Community Foundation of the Dan River-Riverbank Fund to the Piedmont Land Conservancy to develop a Lower Mayo River trail to connect the towns of Mayodan and Madison and the Mayo River State Park with a multi-use trail. This project was recommended by the Leadership Team but not funded through STEP.

*Strategy #4: Create an Artisan Environment in and around Mayodan.*

With picturesque and inspiring venues, like Mayo River State Park, Farris Memorial Park, and Autumn Creek Vineyards, we want Mayodan to be the center of a thriving artisan community. To accomplish this strategy, an oversight group will be created that will connect artists and artisans from a broad geographic area to the opportunities already existing here and to new opportunities that will be developed, including a diversity of themed events scheduled each year and storefront displays in our downtown buildings.

After researching the needs of the arts community in western Rockingham County it was determined that the best use of the STEP grant funds was to join the Rockingham County Arts Council, an existing arts group that has been active in developing and supporting the arts in the county for many years. Collaboration between Mayodan, Downtown Mayodan Merchants Association, and the RCAC is ongoing.

**Leveraging Resources and Collaboration:**

From the very beginning of the NC STEP program efforts were made to form collaborations with other governments and organizations.

The following table attempts to quantify the leveraged value either as actual cash value or staff time/value of the organizations or governmental agencies. This does not include resources from the Town of Mayodan to support and implement various elements of the projects.

Project	Outside Resource	Type of Funding	STEP Grant Projects with an outside match	Outside Resource Value	Total
Branding	R.C. T & ED	Staff Time	\$28,000	NA	<b>28,000</b>
Branding	Town	Cash		\$1,500	<b>1,500</b>
Main Street Program	NC Dept. Commerce	Staff Time	\$12,050 (implementation)	\$35,000	<b>\$47,050</b>
Façade Grant	Private	Cash	\$7,428	\$9,280	<b>16,708</b>
Mayodan Hotel Project	Private	Time (40 hours)	-	\$920	<b>920</b>
Mayodan Hotel Project	R.C. T & ED	Staff Time	-	NA	
River Access Dev.	NC State Park	Cash	\$5,500	\$7,000	<b>\$12,500</b>
Mountain Bike Trail	Foundations	Cash	\$9,000	\$52,300	<b>\$61,300</b>
Mayo River Trail	Foundation	Cash	-	\$15,000	<b>\$15,000</b>
Rivers & Trails Committee	DRBA	Staff Time	\$422	\$12,500	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$62,400</b>	<b>\$133,480</b>	<b>\$195,880</b>

As can be seen from the chart above STEP funds were leveraged over 2 to 1 during the implementation of these 10 projects. Clearly a successful outcome of one of the purposes of the STEP program- seeking collaboration and leveraging resources.

### **Future of STEP Strategies**

The conclusion of the Implementation grant for STEP does not end our efforts to improve Mayodan. All of the strategies will continue to be implemented through either ongoing efforts of existing projects of the development of new projects.

#### *Strategy #1: Branding and Marketing:*

1. Continued development of the Town website to encourage economic and tourism development.
2. Continued implementation of Marketing Plan through strategic advertisement purchases and marketing of special events, including “Hayodan”.

#### *Strategy #2: Implement a Downtown Beautification and Physical Improvements Program as an Attraction Tool:*

1. Continued membership and activities related to the Main Street Program

2. Request that the Town Council continue the Façade Improvement Program in coming fiscal years to encourage maintenance and improvements of downtown commercial properties.
3. Continue working with Rockingham County Tourism & Economic Development to develop over-night accommodations in the Mayodan area.
4. Encourage promotion of the National Register Historic District for tourism and redevelopment of downtown commercial properties.
5. Continue to implement downtown beautification projects such as wayfinding signage, installation of additional street furniture, and development of special events.
6. Review street and sidewalk improvements for better pedestrian connectivity and attractiveness of the downtown and surrounding neighborhood.

*Strategy #3 Develop Natural Resources for Residents and Visitors alike:*

1. Continue development of Mountain Bike Trails at Farris Memorial Park and determine if they can be expanded to other areas in western Rockingham County, including Mayo River State Park.
2. Continue working with staff at Mayo River State Park, Dan River Basin Association, Rockingham County, Madison, and Stoneville to develop additional recreational opportunities for the community and regional visitors, including developing a Mayo River trail system.

*Strategy #4 Create an Artisan Environment in and around Mayodan:*

1. Work with the Rockingham County Arts Council, develop opportunities for local artisans to make and sell their art.
2. Develop marketing materials to encourage artisans to consider relocating to Mayodan to pursue opportunities for low-cost housing, natural beauty for inspiration, and easy access to regional access to markets.