

# Building Local Leaders and Experts for Long-term Community Change

Linda Giltz, AICP, Senior Planner  
Land-of-Sky Regional Council

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# NC Small Town Economic Prosperity Program (NC STEP)

NC STEP Program began in 2006 with a demonstration phase.

- 20 demonstration sites chosen, included 33 small towns

## Selection Criteria:

- economically distressed
- less than 7,500 people
- commitment, and
- capacity to grow.

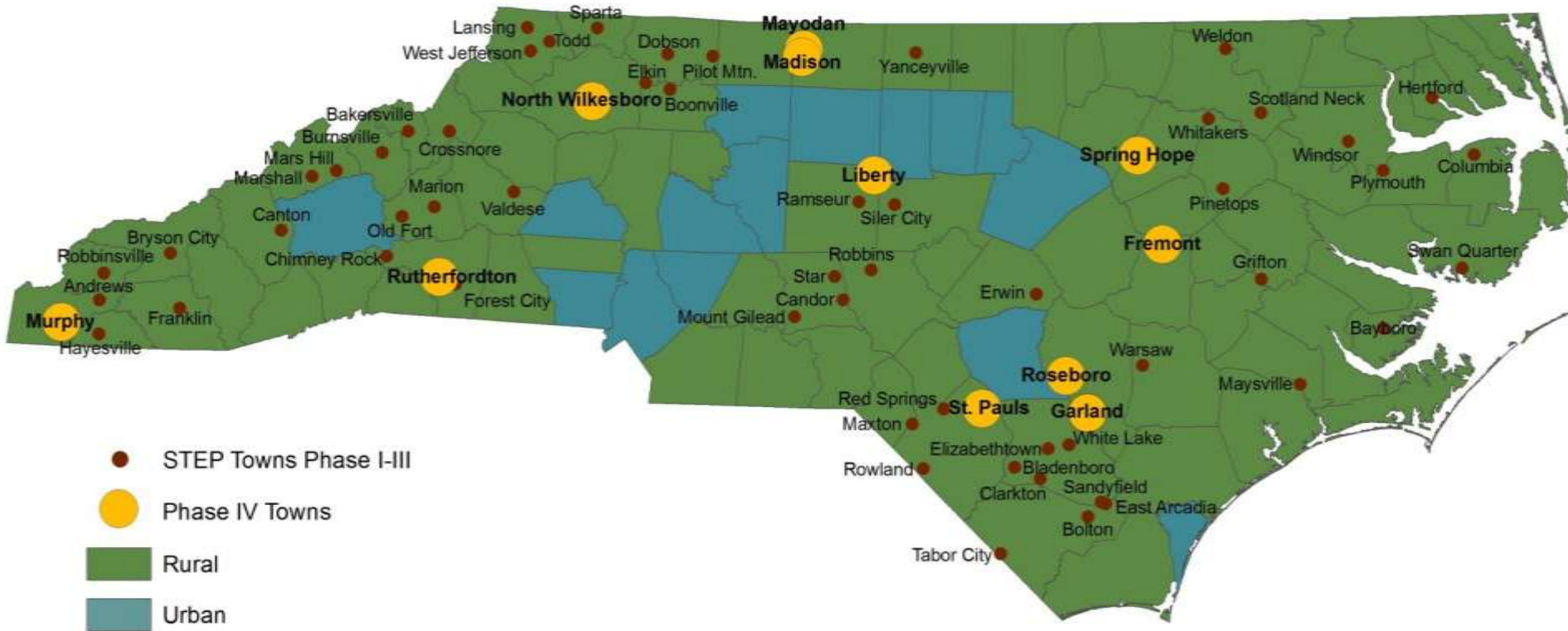


# NC Small Town Economic Prosperity Program – GOALS:

1. **Support economic recovery and revitalization** in small towns adversely affected by structural changes in the economy or recent natural disasters;
2. Apply a **comprehensive** model of **capacity building, technical assistance and grant-making** to aid in revitalization efforts through leadership development, job creation, income growth, commercial investment and business activity
3. Provide information vital to the **development of public policies** that support long-term investment in the economic vitality of North Carolina's small towns.



# NC STEP Phases I-IV



# NC STEP – Keys for Success

- Leadership and capacity-building **training**
- Emphasis on **inclusion** and **diversity** on leadership team
- **Coaching** assistance
- **Funding** for planning and implementation
- Well-defined planning process
- **Clear expectations** – well-defined set of deliverables



Downtown Marshall, NC  
Proposed Redevelopment Properties

**Legend**

- Property Boundary
- Redevelopment Planning Area

**Map Vicinity**

Marshall, NC

Madison County

North Carolina



# Downtown Marshall







# Role of a Coach

- Listen, and keep an overall/holistic perspective
- Help team think about how to grow their leadership and team
- Provide training as needed
- Connect them to other resources



# Transferable Elements

- The importance of FORMING and MAINTAINING a **diverse** and **inclusive** leadership team.

# Building a Community Leadership Team

- How do we get ready for success?
- What human qualities/competencies do we need?



# Building a Community Leadership Team

- Who have we not thought about including?  
Who is missing?

Youth? Newcomers? Non profits leaders?  
Informal leaders? Low income residents?



# Building a Community Leadership Team

- Do we have a good balance of deciders, listeners, doers and creatives on the team?



- Who will keep us honest? Who will ask tough questions that are important to this work?

# Transferable Elements

- Identifying **coaches** who can help communities develop and implement their ideas.
- Providing **leadership** and other capacity-building **training**
- Providing opportunities for **peer-learning**
- Providing **funding** for well-thought-out and key/catalytic projects

**“For me, STEP, in addition to creating economic growth in our town, has been about identifying new leaders and showing some citizens, who in the past had not thought about taking on leadership roles, their leadership potential. Since I have taken on STEP, I have become a Board member on the chamber of commerce, several other committees and joined a county-wide leadership program. I credit STEP in driving me toward those endeavors.” -- Erwin**

**“Be ready to meet, meet, meet.  
Work to involve the total  
community. If you don’t do it, it will  
not get done.” -- Hertford**



**“Listen – The leadership team is a well of knowledge. Everyone has so much real life experience and ideas to share. As an official of the town government, I realized just to get out of the way and just listen and be supportive of these people who have volunteered to help the town move forward, to move the town toward economic sustainability and improvement.” --  
Robbinsville**

# Discussion / Reflection

- What are your local capacity gaps?
- What topics/skills are needed in local training or coaching programs?
- Who in your consortium could act as coaches or trainers?
- What would it take to develop a coaching/training/capacity building program?
- What other pieces are needed?