



Downtown Ayden Development



Vision/Mission: In Ayden, “Que marks the spot” for the first stop on the BBQ Trail. Known for its whole hog, wood-fired, Eastern NC style BBQ, Ayden is the third largest municipality in ever-growing Pitt County, nestled between the capitol and the coast. Our community is the place where people choose to eat, live, work and play. The downtown area offers a walkable, picturesque, inclusive atmosphere bursting with unique destinations and growth opportunities.

“Que marks the spot” for the first stop on the BBQ Trail.

Goal: Become the destination for eastern NC style BBQ. We want to increase the revenue of our downtown businesses that capitalizes on the destination tourist attractions build on our long history of Eastern NC style BBQ.



- Communicate and build relationships with other retail locations to measure their revenue as well.
- Continue to host and improve Kings of Q BBQ Cookoff and Festival.
- Work with marketing and branding committee to expand kinds of merch and where it’s sold, and work with marketing and branding committee to purchase pig sculptures and decorate them.
- Create a walking map or historical walking trail to identify places of interest downtown.

The downtown area offers a inclusive atmosphere and growth opportunities.

Goal: Create a welcoming environment for new, existing, and diverse businesses. We aim to reduce the number of empty storefronts in Ayden’s downtown by 20% in the coming year.

- Maintain and improve downtown business inventory to make it a resource for potential new businesses.
- Create a “New Business Guide” that covers permitting and resources for new business owners.
- Establish a partnership with ECU/PCC entrepreneurship programs and the Pitt County Small Business Center to promote and market our downtown area to new entrepreneurs.
- Create a downtown design guideline to provide a framework for downtown appearance.
- Work with the town to offer business and tax incentives to woman and minority-owned businesses.
- Collaborate with downtown businesses to hold a First Friday event with showcases businesses and offers a one-time sale/promotion.



The downtown area offers a walkable, picturesque atmosphere.



Goal: Downtown Ayden is working on improving the walkability and quality of life in downtown to encourage healthy activity.

- Conduct a walkability assessment and host at least one event in partnership with the Arts and Recreation Dept. downtown.
- Work with Pitt County Health Department (Georgia) to obtain a grant to conduct walkability assessment.
- Collaborate with the Arts and Rec Department to hold one healthy activity event in the downtown area.
- Create a map that shows how far locations are (.25-mile, .5-mile, 1 mile) from downtown.
- Work with the high school and middle school to paint crosswalks downtown.
- Organize a fun walk fundraiser for Downtown Ayden and work with businesses and Chamber to increase participation (potentially connected to BBQ Festival).



About us: Downtown Ayden, Inc. is a local, community driven organization that is striving to make our historic downtown the center of social, economic, and cultural life in Ayden. Through annual events, infrastructure projects, and economic opportunities, Downtown Ayden, Inc. brings the community together to make Ayden a "Hallmark town" welcome to everyone. The Town of Ayden is a North Carolina Main Street Community, designated by the NC Department of Commerce and Main Street & Rural Planning Center.