

EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant

The CDAC received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment grant in 2018 to assess and help communities develop conceptual redevelopment plans for potentially contaminated sites in coal-impacted counties in southwest Virginia. The EPA Assessment Grant will provide funding for CDAC to help communities determine if a site was contaminated (and if so, with what) and then plan for the possible redevelopment of that site through a conceptual design and community engagement process. EPA does not require or commit communities to any cleanup if the community participated in this process.

Virginia Department of Forestry (VA DOF)

CDAC recently received an Urban and Community Forestry grant from the VA DOF. The purpose of this grant is to help communities with urban and community forestry projects that promote healthy living opportunities in communities throughout Virginia. This includes helping communities plan for open space, parks and recreation, tree planting plans, landscaping plans, and greenway designs. CDAC will work with 2-3 communities during 2019-2020.

Other Recent/Current Projects

- Smithfield, VA: St. Luke's Historic Church & Museum Conceptual Site Master Plan
- St. Paul, VA: Riverside Drive Revitalization Conceptual Master Plan
- Honaker, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Slate Building Property

Statewide: Lost Communities of Virginia Driving Tours

In the spirit of the award-winning *Lost Communities of Virginia* book, CDAC is developing driving tour brochures for 4-5 county regions throughout the Commonwealth. The routes go through backroads, passing through small, once-thriving communities with suggested stops at places that tell stories of the places, provide unique cultural experiences, and patronize local businesses that exemplify the ideals of the tour through their buildings, landscapes, or history. The tours connect to major highways so you can drive as much or as little as you like in a day or a weekend visit.



Covering the counties of Appomattox, Campbell, Charlotte, Halifax, and Pittsylvania, the Lost Communities of Virginia Southern Driving Tour brochure is available on our website for download and in print from local tourism offices. The Lost Communities of Virginia Backroads of Southwest Virginia Driving Tour brochure covering Carroll, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Wythe Counties is available on our website and in print through the tourism offices. The brochures can be found at: cdac.arch.vt.edu/tour.html

If interested in possible inclusion on a future route, please contact Terri Fisher at tfisher@vt.edu

Meet the Staff



Elizabeth Gilboy
Director
egilboy@vt.edu



Terri Fisher
Lost Communities of Virginia
Project Manager
tfisher@vt.edu



Maxine Lyons
Office Manager
lyons@vt.edu



Nick Proctor
Landscape Architecture
Project Manager
nproctor@vt.edu

Contributing CAUS Faculty



Lisa Tucker
Professor and Program Chair
Interior Design
ltucker@vt.edu



Kevin Jones
Visiting Assistant Professor
kejones4@vt.edu

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The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) is an outreach center in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, that assists communities, civic groups, and nonprofit organizations in improving their natural and built environments through research, community engagement, and interdisciplinary design. We provide opportunities for students to engage with communities, connecting university knowledge with real world experience. CDAC believes every community deserves quality design that promotes a healthy, sustainable way of life. This design philosophy is reflected in projects such as trails for health and fitness, parks for outdoor recreation, outdoor learning environments, and the design or redevelopment of structures that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient.

CDAC's work focuses on landscape architecture, architecture, interior design, and planning. Since its humble beginnings in 1988 through a grant from the U. S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education, the Design Center has completed over 300 projects in communities throughout Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

Recent grants have included an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant and a Virginia Department of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Grant. The EPA grant will allow CDAC to help communities plan for redevelopment of brownfield sites. The DOF grant is focused on creating plans that conserve, protect, and enhance community natural resources.



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community design
assistance center
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

<http://cdac.caus.vt.edu>

Community Design Assistance Center
101 South Main Street, Suite 2
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Phone: 540/231-5644
Fax: 540/231-6089
www.cdac.caus.vt.edu

CDAC Success Stories

Mendota, VA: “The Store” opens in the historic Benfield Store building; creates 4 jobs!



CDAC worked with stakeholders of the Mendota community to develop a conceptual redevelopment plan for the former Benfield Store. Four women entrepreneurs, Dottie Dye along with Katie Harris, Lisa Edwards, and Dawn Sims, opened the doors to their new business on May 4, 2019, historically referred to as “the store.” The new business will help support a regional initiative to diversify local economies and encourage eco-tourism. The Mendota Trail is a trail under development that, when completed, will connect Bristol and Mendota with a rail-trail recreational experience. “The Store” will provide ready-made meals as well as outdoor and bicycle gear and artisan classes that focus on crafts unique to the Appalachian region.

Cleveland, VA: Community opens unique swinging bridge and campground near Clinch River



Through a VA Department of Forestry grant, CDAC worked with community members in 2014 to develop conceptual plans for ballpark enhancements, a new riverwalk, and a new campground at the former elementary school. Since that time, the community has acquired over \$1.2 million in grants to revitalize their community, transforming the once coal community to an eco-tourism destination that highlights the Clinch River. The swinging bridge, campground, riverwalk, park, and downtown improvements were completed May 2019 and made possible through a creative funding collaboration between VA-DHCD, VA-DCR, VA-DGIF, FEMA, ARC, and others. Nearby, VA DCR has also made Tank Hollow Falls an ADA accessible hiking destination with parking, trails, and clear signage.

Virginia Department of Forestry Grant Projects

Page County, VA: Stanley Landfill Mountain Bike Park Conceptual Master Plan



Page County owns a former landfill, which closed in the mid-1990s and has since been capped. It is generally bordered by Eldon Yates Drive, Eureka Drive, and Old Mine Road with access via Eldon Yates Drive. Page County would like to create a mountain bike park on the property providing a mountain bike skills training area, biking and hiking trails, and a venue for special events, such as for traveling mountain bike competition circuits. The goal is for this to serve as a recreational development project that will boost tourism and the local economy as a regional attraction, increase county-wide trail efforts, and provide a park with walking trails for local use. The area offers varied terrain with numerous technical components and the ability to expand local trail systems. The site is also suitable for walking trails, birding enthusiasts, and provides outstanding views at the crest of the former landfill.

Glade Spring, VA: Conceptual Hemlock Street Trailhead Design



The Glade Spring Trailhead functions as a threshold into town for visitors as well as a gathering space for the surrounding community. Serving as a gateway into town, this site will guide visitors into the key areas of Glade Spring such as a downtown shopping areas as well as the Point Pavilion. The trailhead concept provides amenities for both visitors and locals, while celebrating and showcasing the town’s identity.

EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Projects

Saltville, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for a New Public Works Facility



The Town of Saltville recently purchased a 4-acre parcel in the industrial park on Battleground Avenue in order to relocate its salt storage facility and town maintenance facility. Relocating the Town’s maintenance facility and salt storage to the Battleground Avenue location greatly enhances the aesthetic, safety, and economic value of Saltville’s downtown properties. The redevelopment plan for a new public works facility includes an administrative building, and a maintenance building with workshops and storage. Additionally, there is a maintenance yard with a salt shed, equipment storage, emergency fuel station, and material stockpiles that is secured with a perimeter security fence system.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Campground Design at the Former Arty Lee School Site



The campground design at the former Arty Lee School site is an opportunity for the Dante community to provide a fee-based outdoor lodging experience while also enhancing amenities adjacent to the community’s baseball field. The redeveloped site contains both primitive and RV camping, bathhouse with showers, laundry, and vending machines, RV dump station, trash collection, small playground, nature observation desk, picnic shelter, and connections to surrounding trail networks. Campers have easy access to Dante’s downtown where there is a large playground, park, stage, and periodic food truck during special events. Visitors can also make a short drive to the Clinch River, one of the country’s most biologically diverse waterways, for floating, fishing, or swimming.

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plans for the Former Benfield Grocery Store and Former Mendota Depot Site



The former Benfield Store and adjacent structures were once contributing enterprises to the economic success of Mendota, a historically agriculture-based community in southwest Virginia. CDAC worked with a group of stakeholders to prepare a conceptual redevelopment plan for the former Benfield Store, the former bank building adjacent to the Benfield Store, and the former Mendota Depot site located directly across Mendota Rd. The three sites, once redeveloped collectively, position Mendota as a prominent outdoor destination with a new business that caters to pre-made meals and outdoor gear, an outdoor patio and garden with mural, and a new trailhead for the Mendota Trail. The Mendota trailhead redevelopment plan proposes a new pavilion with a fire pit and public restrooms, parking, several small picnic shelters, bike racks, open greenspace, and improved wayfinding signage.

Marion, VA: Abijah Thomas House Barn Complex Conceptual Design



The Abijah Thomas House is a rare octagon house, completed in 1854, and a historical landmark in Smyth County, VA. The goal of this project was to develop a conceptual barn complex design as a component of the site master plan that restores the Abijah Thomas house and it surrounding grounds. The conceptual barn complex design includes two barns that provide interior space for for special events, day-use guest services, lodging, and historical interpretive reenactments.