

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store



Prepared for Mountain Heritage, Inc.  
April 2019

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Project funding provided through a Brownfields Assessment grant through the  
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

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CDAC team members (left to right):  
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**The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC)** is an outreach center in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech that assists communities, neighborhood groups and non-profit organizations in improving the natural and built environments. Assistance is provided in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, planning, and interior design. Working with communities, the conceptual planning and design provides communities with a graphic vision of their project that can then be used for grant applications and fundraising for the next steps toward implementation.

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The CDAC team would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions throughout the project:

Katie Harris  
Community Member

Oscar Harris  
Community Member

Dottie Dye  
Community Member

Helene Holbrook  
Community Member

and

Those who volunteered time for the betterment of their community

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Introduction

The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) of Virginia Tech received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment grant to assess properties and help communities develop conceptual redevelopment plans for potentially contaminated sites in southwest Virginia communities.

The EPA Assessment Grant provides funding for CDAC to help communities determine if a site is contaminated and then to plan for the possible redevelopment of that site through conceptual design development. EPA does not require or commit communities to any cleanup if the community participates in this process.

EPA's goals are to:

- protect human health and the environment
  - sustain reuse
  - promote partnerships, and
  - strengthen the marketplace

The EPA describes Brownfields as:

“A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

The purpose of this EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant project is to conduct a Phase I Environmental Assessment (conducted by Cardno, the environmental consultant working with CDAC) and a conceptual redevelopment plan for the Laura K Harris property located at the corner of Mendota Road and Civil Drive (referred to in the report as the Harris property and the former Benfield Grocery Store). It is comprised of parcel numbers 095A1-A-34, 095A1-A-35, and 095A1-A-36. Parcel #34 previously served as a general store and gas station with two gas pumps while parcels 35 and 36 had a bank building, which has since fallen down.

Due to its immediate proximity to the proposed Mendota Trail trailhead site across the street and the store's expected contributions to the cultural and economic health of Mendota, CDAC worked with the property owner and stakeholders committee to create a conceptual redevelopment plan for the former Benfield Store.

The grant does not require cleanup, but rather is an opportunity to work with the stakeholders committee to develop conceptual redevelopment plans that help create a vision for the property's future.

A summary of the conceptual redevelopment concept can be found in this report.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project Overview

The purpose of this project was to work with a stakeholders committee, which included the property owner, representatives of Mountain Heritage, Inc. and other community members to identify possible new uses for the former Benfield Store and concrete slab immediately adjacent to the east side of the building (see p. 15).

The former Benfield Store building is in a central location to other surrounding community assets. The proposed trailhead is across Mendota Road and a community garden is planned just northeast of the store. The North Fork of the Holston River, an emerging destination for outdoor recreation, is 0.3 miles south on Civil Drive. Further, the Mendota Community Center is 0.25 miles east on Mendota Road.

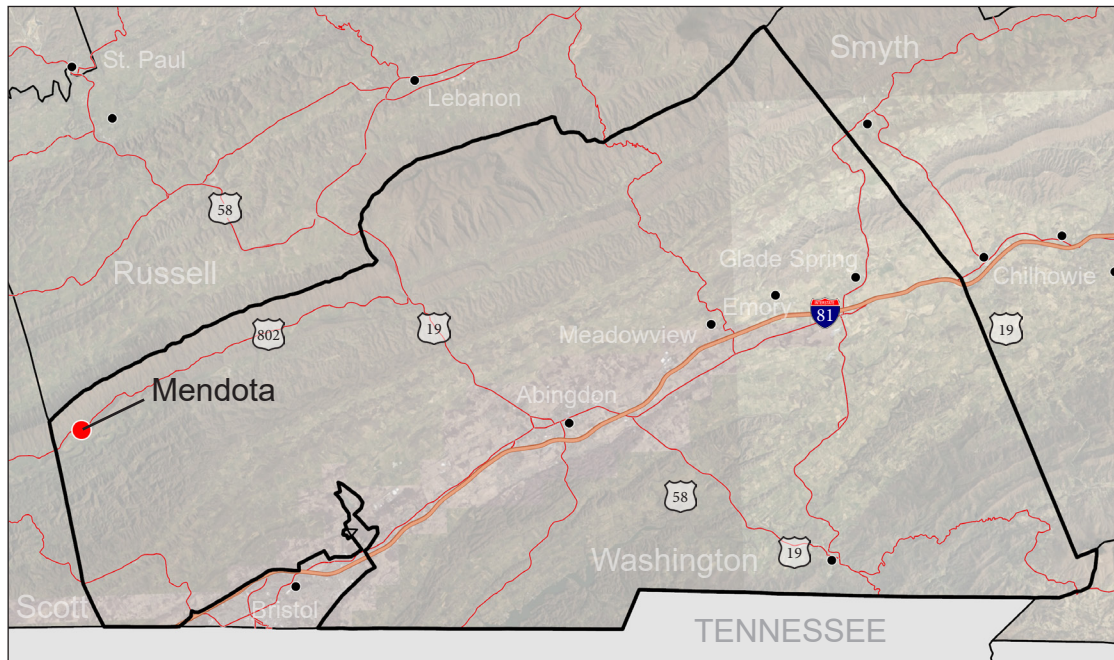
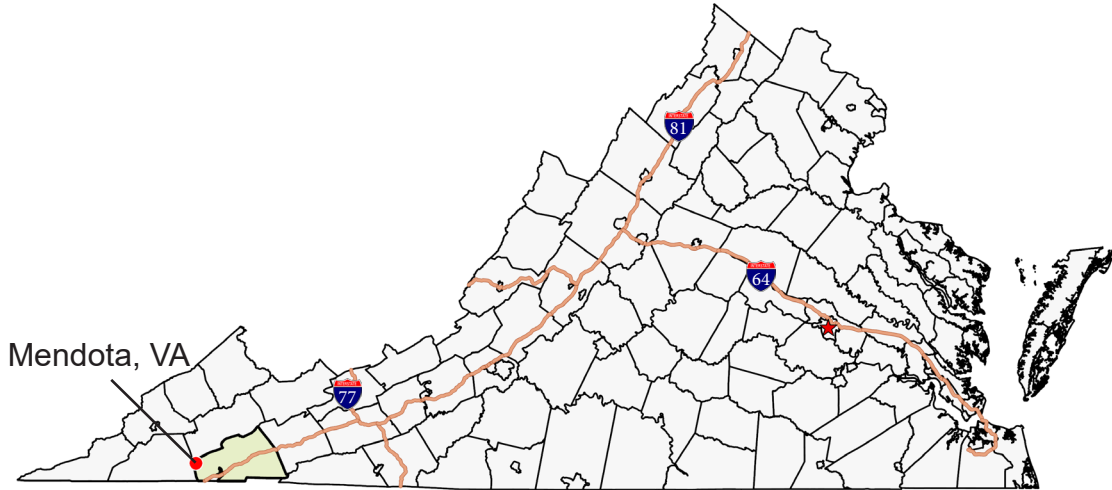
The general design process involved creating two preliminary design concepts, obtaining feedback, and revising the designs into a final redevelopment plan. The final redevelopment plan focused on transforming the existing ground floor into a community-oriented business and gathering space that supports cultural heritage and outdoor recreation tourism, celebrating the local assets of Mendota and southwest Virginia.



Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

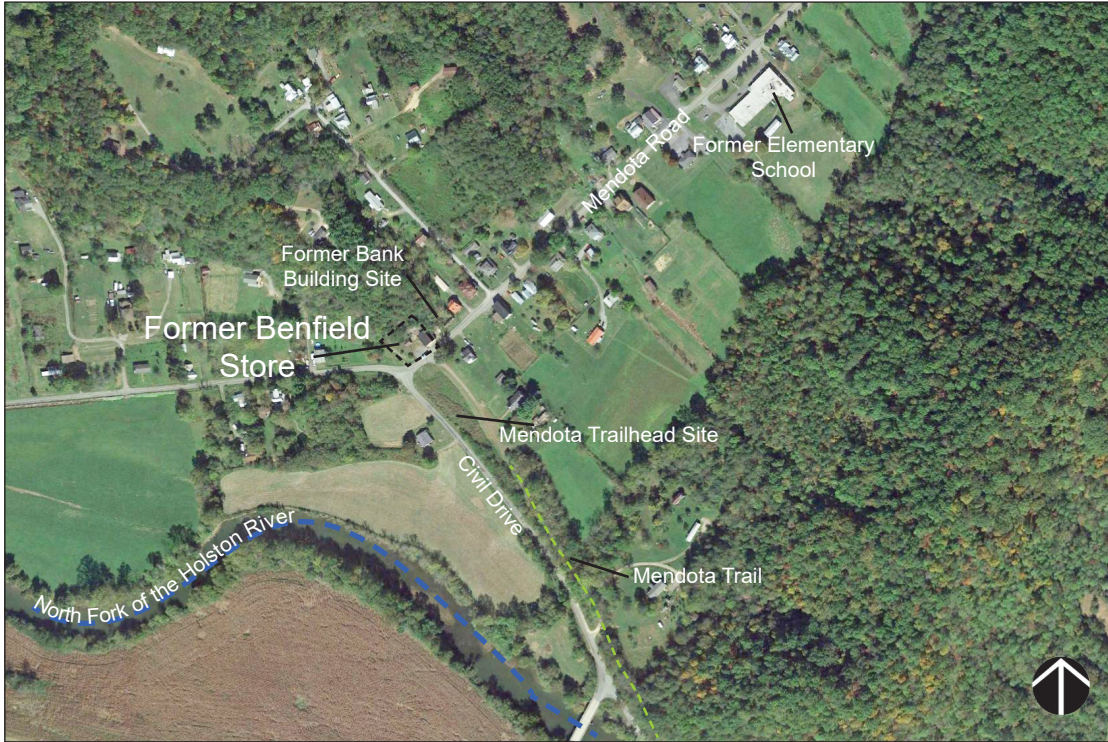
**Project Location**



The maps above and the aerials on the following page show the location of Washington County within southwest Virginia, where the community of Mendota is located within the county, and the location of the site at the corner of Civil Drive and Mendota Road.

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**



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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Background of Mendota

The Town of Mendota is located in southwest Virginia along the North Fork of the Holston River. The nearest major communities are Abingdon and Bristol, VA. Mendota served as a thriving agricultural community with stores offering general merchandise and a rail line connecting Mendota and Bristol. The trains first carried coal, then became a passenger train, then later an excursion train. The train would stop in Mendota at the depot which was located at the current trailhead site. The depot was removed and the railroad has been inactive since the 1970s or 80s.

The Mendota General Store was a wooden structure at the corner of Mendota Road and Civil Drive built in the late 1880s. Frazier Shepherd purchased the store around 1928, tore it down, and built the current brick building. There is a sign on the building that reads "A. F. Shepherd Store Built 1928". Harold Benfield later purchased the building and renamed it the Benfield Grocery Store. Two gas pumps were added around 1968 and operated as a Shell station until about 1979. Benfield Grocery Store was open until around 1998.

Down the street from the former Benfield Grocery Store was a public school, which closed in the 1980s. The former school building is currently used as a branch location of the Washington County Public Library and as the Mendota Community Center. The Community Center also serves as a museum and repository of the area's history and stories of the people of Mendota.

After the railroad ceased operation, the City of Bristol, VA purchased the railroad property. In 2016 it was deeded to Mountain Heritage, Inc., a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to the improvement of education, health, and natural resource conservation in the Appalachian Mountains, to develop a rails-to-trails hiking and biking trail along the old Southern Railway property from Bristol, VA through Mendota to the Scott County line. The Mendota Trail has been a priority project for the community for the last 40 years.

Due to its location along the North Fork of the Holston and with the Mendota Trail coming into town along the former rail bed, Mendota has been the site of increased interest in outdoor recreation. The Mendota Trail will improve the quality of life in Mendota and be a potential local economic development driver bringing visitors into town and providing an asset to locals.

The location of the former Benfield Store is immediately across Mendota Road from the proposed trailhead site and adjacent to the former bank building. The former Benfield Store is a prime location for a new business that celebrates the regions cultural heritage with the potential of linking the trail to the Mendota Community Center. Its proximity to the proposed Mendota Trail trailhead and North Fork of Holston River offers a great opportunity for redevelopment.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Design Process

The design process began with a stakeholder input session on September 11, 2018 in the former Benfield Store on Mendota Road. During that visit the CDAC team facilitated a discussion with the property owner and several community members to discuss the broad vision of Mendota and their redevelopment ideas for the building and the community's former downtown area. CDAC also visited several key sites including the proposed Mendota trailhead site, the Mendota Trail, the former bank building, and a public access point to the North Fork of the Holston River. A site visit, photographs, early sketches, and input from the stakeholders, combined with historical research, created a comprehensive foundation that the CDAC team used to develop two preliminary conceptual redevelopment plans.



VT interior design program chair Lisa Tucker and Joe Morici of Cardno discuss initial ideas for the building's interior with community member Dottie Dye during a site visit on September 11, 2018.



The CDAC team hears stories of the original general store by Dottie Dye and Katie Harris (far right).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The team returned to Mendota on October 16, 2018 to present two preliminary design concepts for the redevelopment of the former Benfield Store, which included a portion of the adjacent concrete slab to the right of the building. Following the presentation, stakeholders provided feedback about what they (dis)liked and what they thought might have been missing.

The team revised the two preliminary design concepts into a final redevelopment plan with supporting drawings, which were presented to the Mendota stakeholders on December 3, 2018.

Meeting notes from the input sessions and presentations can be found in the Appendix.



CDAC student designers (left to right) Kaitey Crouse, Nicole Robertson, and Alisa Chance present the final redevelopment plan for “The Store” to Mendota stakeholders on December 3, 2018 inside of the Benfield Store.



**PART 1:  
FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT**

## FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

### Design Description

The former Benfield Store is a building that is passionately endeared by community members for the memories it holds and its historic character. The final design concept focuses on both of those qualities by reinvigorating “The Store” as a place for community and economic growth. Located at the north terminus of the Mendota Trail, The Store provides a variety of outdoor recreation and general store items. There are also opportunities to host crafting classes, small musical performances, or special community-oriented events for all to enjoy throughout the year.

Looking from the front door entrance into the store, a game area with informal seating is on the left. The original shelving in this area along the wall can be used to store board games, chess pieces, and playing cards. Souvenirs and merchandise such as t-shirts can also be sold from the original shelving on the same side further down. Local hand-made crafts are also displayed in the two existing display counters with glass paneling. In the back of the store, food, drinks, and ice cream can be ordered to-go from the service counter and enjoyed outside on the patio where there are tables, chairs, and umbrellas.

On the right side of the entrance are a collection of table and chairs, which can be used for a variety of crafting classes. The craft tables can easily be rearranged for other uses such as occasional musical performances. The right (east) wall shelving contains jars for candy and trail mix, nutrition bars, bicycle accessories, and drawers for storage. Both sides of the store features bright vintage signs, many of which are original to The Store. An antique rocking horse and doll house are also on display, both original to The Store as well.

At the rear of the building the existing bathroom has been expanded to comply with ADA guidelines. To accommodate the larger bathroom and required clearances, the dividing wall between the existing bathroom and kitchen is moved toward the kitchen, reducing the kitchen’s overall square footage by a marginal amount.

The renovated prep kitchen contains a stove, dishwasher, refrigerator, and three compartment sink. A movable prep counter was also added in front of the fireplace, but can be stored away if it is desired that the fireplace is shown. A twelve gallon water heater can also be stored underneath the existing staircase to replace the existing one that must be relocated after shifting the bathroom dividing wall.

The inspiration for the basket weave floor design was taken from the actual art of basket-weaving, a common tradition in Mendota and southwest Virginia. The woven chair cushions are designed in a similar fashion. Other enhancements to the building’s interior including painting the shelving with a bright red color, which is a reference to the red accent that is often included in traditional baskets. The warm color palette was inspired by the natural colors used in basket-weaving, such as American White Oak.





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Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Final Design Concept  
Floor Plan  
December 3, 2018



Perspective 1: Exterior Facade from Mendota Road

View of the Mendota Store as seen from across Mendota Road. Awnings are added to each window to shade interior seating spaces. A sign for the store is also added so that visitors arriving from the trailhead can easily identify "The Store" and are invited to Mendota. Chairs and tables are placed outside for those who want to linger around the store as they enjoy sandwiches or take a rest before continuing their day of adventure in the area.



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Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Final Design Concept  
Perspective 1: Exterior Facade from Mendota Road  
December 3, 2018



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Perspective 2: From the Store Entrance with Casual Seating and Craft Tables

Looking from the front door entrance into the store, a game area with casual seating and crafting displays line the wall on the left, while the right side is home to crafting tables, which can be moved to create a small area for local musicians to play. The right wall shelving contains jars for candy and trail mix, nutrition bars, bicycle accessories, and drawers for storage. Towards the back of the store, there are souvenirs to the left as well as displays of crafts created by the community. In the back of the store, food, drinks, and ice cream can be ordered to-go from the service counter and enjoyed outside on the patio where there are tables, chairs, and umbrellas.

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Final Design Concept  
Perspective 2: From the Store Entrance with Casual Seating and Craft Tables  
December 3, 2018



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Perspective 3: View of Checkout Counter

Looking from the checkout counter towards the front of the store, people are performing with live music on the left, while on the right side people are enjoying games and spending time with other community members. The display case shows off crafts that were created by the community, such as the pillow covers for couches and chairs and can be customized to personal preference. T-shirts and baskets are displayed along the wall as souvenirs and potential picnic basket rentals.

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
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Final Design Concept  
Perspective 3: View of the Checkout Counter  
December 3, 2018



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Perspective 4: Rear Serving Counter and Checkout Counter

Looking from the ice cream coolers towards the serving and checkout counters. At the serving counter, guests and visitors can order food, drinks, and ice cream to be enjoyed outside. The checkout counter contains items that are small enough to be displayed as a final point of interest for sale. Historic signs are placed behind the counter that are related to the function of the space. The kitchen can be seen in the background. "The Store" logo is prominently located above the staircase.

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Final Design Concept  
Perspective 4: Rear Serving Counter and Checkout Counter  
December 3, 2018



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Perspective 5: Kitchen with Commercial Appliances and Food Prep Counters

Looking into the new kitchen space, there is a three compartment sink, a stove and oven combo. Additional counter space is added next to the stairs as well as in front of the fireplace. The mobile counter space near the fireplace can be moved, if desired, to see the fireplace better.

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

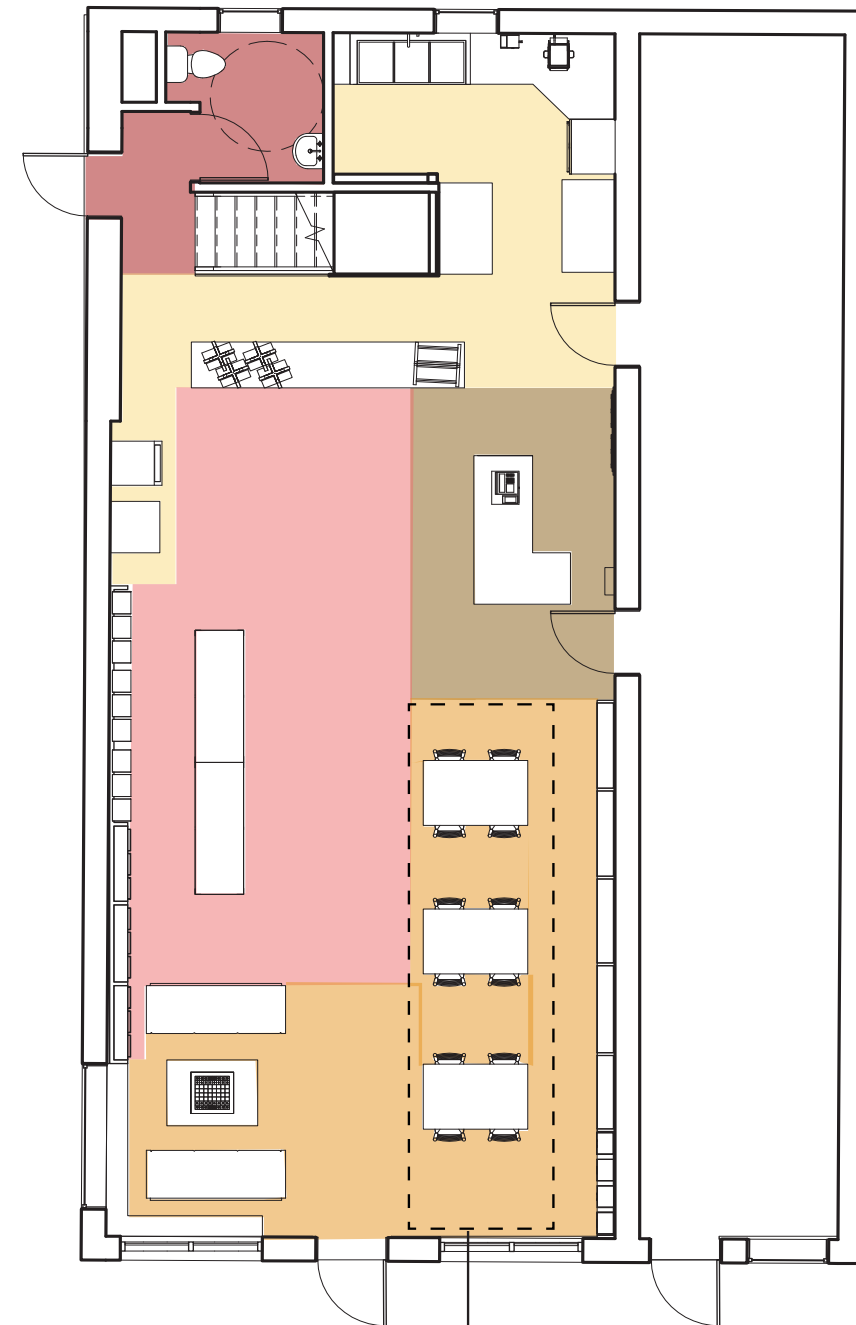
Final Design Concept  
Perspective 5: Kitchen with Commercial Appliances and Food Prep Counters  
December 3, 2018



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Seating is used for crafting classes and can be moved for musical performances

LEGEND

- Bathroom
- Food Preparation/Service
- General Store, Biking Supplies, and Crafting
- Check-Out
- Crafts Display

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Final Design Concept  
Axon Diagram of Interior Uses  
December 3, 2018

**Craft Seating**



Alfred Village Side Chair  
Chilton Handcrafted



Ladder Back Dining Chair (2)  
Target



Ice Cream/Novelty Display Freezer  
31" x 28" - Beverage Air  
Webstaurant

**Craft Tables**



Bass Harbor Dining Table  
Chilton Handcrafted



Shaker Style Extension  
32"x48"  
Target



Two Shelf Air Curtain Merchandiser  
36" x 60" - Federal Industries  
Webstaurant

**Informal Coffee Table**



Maple Shaker Coffee Table  
Stimberlake Handcrafted



Shaker Coffee Table Caramel  
Target

Shelving Paint  
**Sherwin Williams**  
Vanillin SW 6371  
**Valspar**  
Malted Milk

Shelving Edges, Freezer +  
Counter-top Paint  
**Sherwin Williams**  
Rave Red SW 6608  
**Valspar**  
Bright Red

Wall Paint  
**Sherwin Williams**  
High Reflective White SW 7757  
**Valspar**  
Mineral Ash

**Informal Seating**



Amish McCoy Mission Sofa  
DutchCrafters



Baxton Studio Mission Style  
Sofa  
Target

Flooring Base Paint  
**Sherwin Williams**  
Big Chill SW 7648  
H&C ColorTop  
**Valspar**  
Light Gray/Satin/Interior  
Exterior Porch and Floor Paint

Flooring Pattern Paint  
**Sherwin Williams**  
Snowbound SW 7004  
H&C ColorTop  
**Valspar**  
Swiss Coffee  
Tintable Satin Interior/  
Exterior Porch and Floor Paint

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**Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Benfield Store**

Final Design Concept  
Furnitures, Appliances, and Finishes Recommendations  
December 3, 2018



# PART 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Summary

The former Benfield Store, originally built in the late 1880's, is in overall good condition. The current owner has made continuous improvements over the recent years, including a new roof. The building is constructed of brick and has two stories. The second floor has historically been used as a private residence and remains that way today. Special considerations should be made to ensure that the conceptual design and the uses it proposes are sensitive to the residents above. The ground floor, which is the focus area of this conceptual design process, is where the general store/grocery store used to operate.

The ground floor has been well maintained with large portions in its original condition. The floor surface is finished concrete with a painted finish. The ceiling is stamped tin and is original. There is a unique shot gun hole in the ceiling caused by a non-fatal accident in the store. After speaking with the property owner, this hole is worth preserving as it contributes to the store's rich history and is a one-of-a-kind "decoration".

Other original features include the fireplace, ice chest, stairs, and shelving throughout. The fireplace was a common place for community member to gather in a warm area, socialize, and spend time together while items cooked in the kitchen. There is one bathroom on the ground floor and is not ADA-compliant. A large storage space is located on the opposite side of the fireplace and ice chest that was not intensively included in this conceptual redevelopment process. Though the doors to the ice chest remains in the wall, the chest itself was removed years ago.

Environmentally, the general store used to sell gas for vehicles where the current gravel parking lot is located on the west side of the building. At the outset of this project, the condition and presence/absence of the underground storage tank (UST) that held the gas was both unclear and not documented. Older UST's such as this one, operating in the mid-1900s, have common issues with leakage, posing varying degrees of environmental concern. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted in conjunction with the conceptual redevelopment process to determine if there were any environmental concerns. An executive summary of the Phase I ESA can be found in the Appendix.

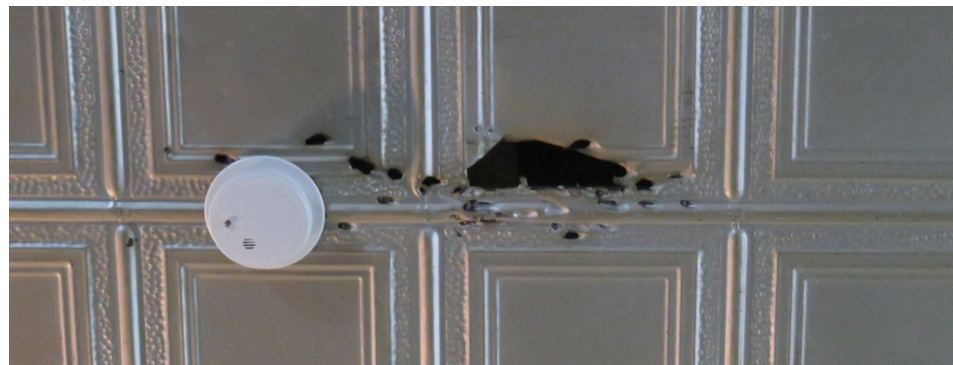
The following pages contain images and approximate dimensions of the existing building.



Store interior with original store shelving.



Checkout counter with original ice box doors in background (double doors).



Bullet holes in the ceiling to be kept for historic/storytelling purposes.



Store exterior and future patio space.



Store exterior



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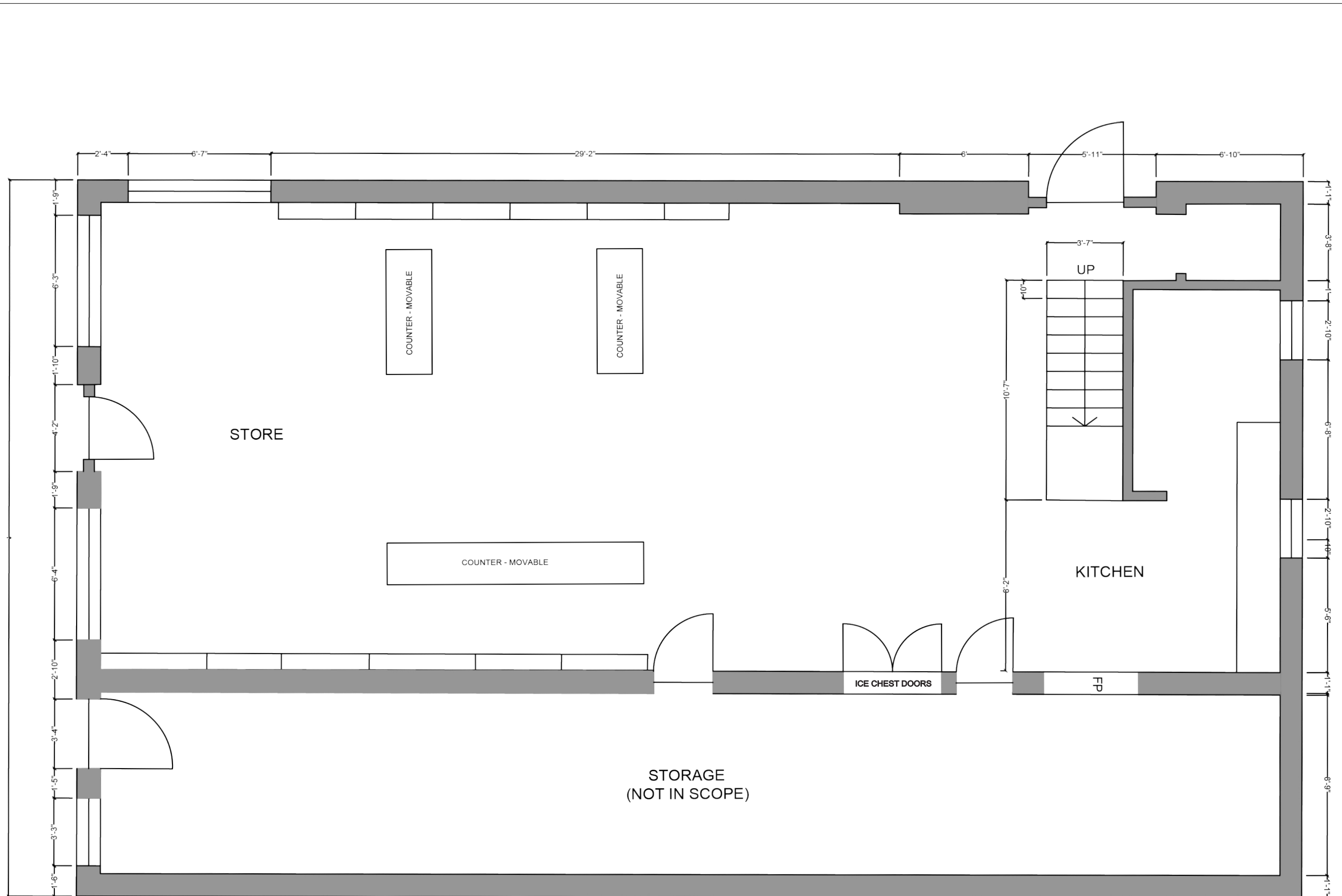
Existing Conditions  
Site Images  
October 16, 2018



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**Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store**

Existing Conditions  
Approximate Floor Plan Dimensions  
October 16, 2018

**PART 3:  
PRELIMINARY  
DESIGN CONCEPTS**

## PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

### Concept 1

#### Design Description

Mendota is a community with a long-standing history of agriculture production. The community, located in southwest Virginia, is also in a region where its residents are known for its rich storytelling and handmade artistry. Concept 1 embraces the artistic heritage of Mendota and the surrounding region by creating a unique atmosphere to showcase completed goods while providing space for craft workshops within The Store.

As the customer enters the store, a sign above the back staircase stating “The Store” creates an iconic backdrop. According to the property owner, “The Store” is how locals affectionately have referred to the building since its early days as an operational general store. To the left (west) of the entrance is an open, informal seating space, which is reminiscent of the times when patrons would play checkers and other games near the fireplace located at the rear of the building.

A unique accessory used by community members that either made crafts or gathered vegetables in their garden was the common woven basket. Throughout the building, the floor has a basket-weave pattern that creates a thoughtful reflection to such a familiar crafting and agriculture tool.

To the right (east) of the entrance are dedicated craft tables. These tables can be used daily by individuals working on specific projects or by periodic classes. The classes can be organized using a fee-based structure as an additional revenue stream. The tables and chairs can also be rearranged to meet the needs of different class types and sizes. Storage for craft supplies is located along the wall, reusing the original shelves that line the walls. Two glass displays are placed just beyond the informal seating area and opposite of the crafting tables. These displays can highlight the creations from the crafting classes throughout the year.

The shelving in the current building is original and a great opportunity to incorporate a familiar element into the redevelopment plan. The left (west) wall shelving displays merchandise with The Store’s iconic new logo as well as other merchandise and handmade crafts. These can be sold and could help advertise the craft classes they plan to have in the store periodically. The right (east) side shelving displays a variety of hiking materials and convenience goods, such as snacks, beverages, bug spray, and sunscreen. Beyond the craft tables is the checkout counter, which is adjacent to the original ice box and remains a central feature to help tell the story of The Store’s history. The back of the store includes an ADA bathroom that has been redeveloped to meet accessibility standards.

At the rear of the building is a small kitchen in which premade lunch items such as sandwiches can be prepared. Premade picnic lunches are available for purchase

## PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

and picked up in the basket. After finishing, customers return their basket for the next guest to use.

The furnishings chosen for this concept were inspired by some of the items found in the The Store in times past. The chairs are shaker-style ladderbacks, with red weaved cushions. The tables are rectangular to allow for more space for crafting.

The main inspiration for this concept was the basket-renting services and weaving classes that are being considered by the owners. The floor plan was based on a weave-like grid and the American white oak and pine materials were chosen based on Virginian baskets. The red accent was based on the pre-existing display pieces that the owners plan to keep and red paint was applied to the outer layer of the shelf to visually emphasize the weaving pattern. The flooring also bears a weaving pattern, which can be achieved with a flooring stencil and two layers of paint. Ultimately, the concept creates a whimsical and creative atmosphere that embraces the character of The Store and surrounding community.

The following pages contain the floor plan, perspective, axon, and precedent images.



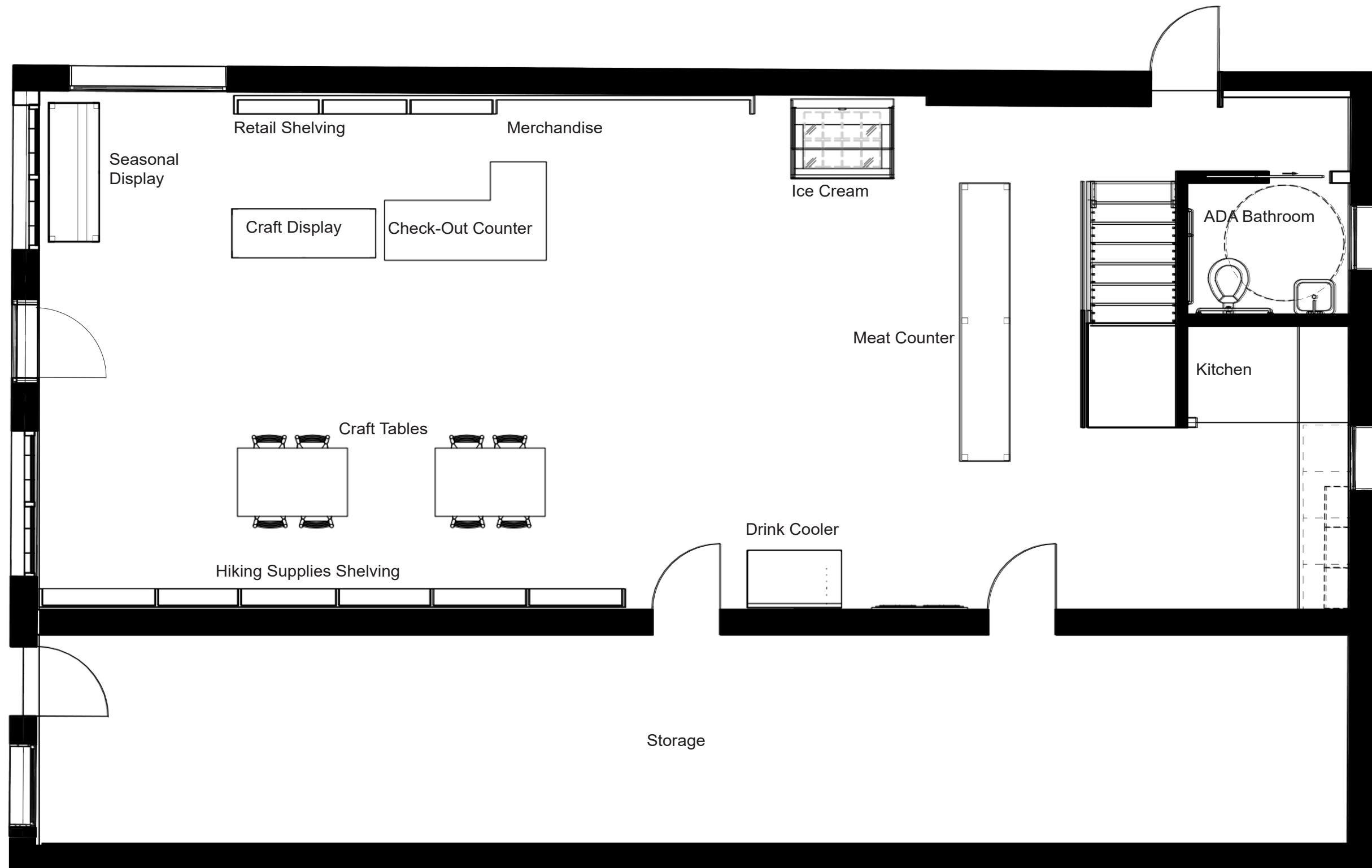
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Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
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Preliminary Design Concept 1  
Floor Plan  
October 16, 2018



0'-0" 1'-0" 3'-0" 6'-0"





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Copper Beech Interior  
Grid Layout of the Floor



Copper Beech Interior  
Food Display



Copper Beech Interior  
Shelving



View from Front Door



Overall Design Layout

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Preliminary Design Concept 1  
Perspective, Axon, and Precedent Images  
October 16, 2018

## PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

### Concept 2

#### Design Description

This concept transforms The Store into a destination for the Mendota Trail with space for a trail-oriented business and casual community gathering. As the Mendota Trail is developed into a regional outdoor recreation attraction, The Store is in a fantastic location to meet visitors' needs by selling all of the trail essentials.

The Store sells premade sandwiches and packaged ice cream. In addition, several displays throughout the building will provide visitors the opportunity to purchase souvenirs made from local artists to remember their visit. A flexible seating arrangement provides the additional opportunity for The Store to be used as a space for playing board games or hosting indoor events such as live music throughout the year.

The main entrance to The Store is located on Mendota Road and immediately across from the trailhead. After entering, visitors will find counters to the right and a casual seating area to the left. Shelving, original to the building, lines both walls with merchandise and other items such as snacks, picnic baskets, and candy. The space includes areas to grab a boxed lunch at the back of the building or linger in the area a little longer with tables on the patio and craft tables. There is also a lounge area with sofas in the front of the store with a table for games.

Historically, the large meat counter was located near the entrance. This concept locates the checkout counter generally in its original location on the right (east) side when entering the building. Likewise, the ice cream cooler is placed near its original location to the right and towards the window where it is visible from people walking along the street or exiting the trail. Modern freezers are used to prevent cooling issues caused by the sun shining directly on the cooler itself. To the left of the entrance of the space is a gathering space for sofas, also visible from the window to show that this is also a space to build community and to linger in Mendota longer.

Inspiration for this space was drawn from current country stores that are across both Virginia and the U.S., including the Floyd Country Store. Colors and materials for this concept were chosen from looking at the Mendota Trail itself. Colors were chosen by looking at the Clinch Mountains, looking at the blues of mountains in the distance.

The Store space is a comfortable space that, with flexible furniture, can be used to accommodate multiple uses for the community. Furniture used within the space is kept from what is currently in the store with newer seating and tables that are taken from the current character of the space. The furniture is also the main way color is introduced in this concept.

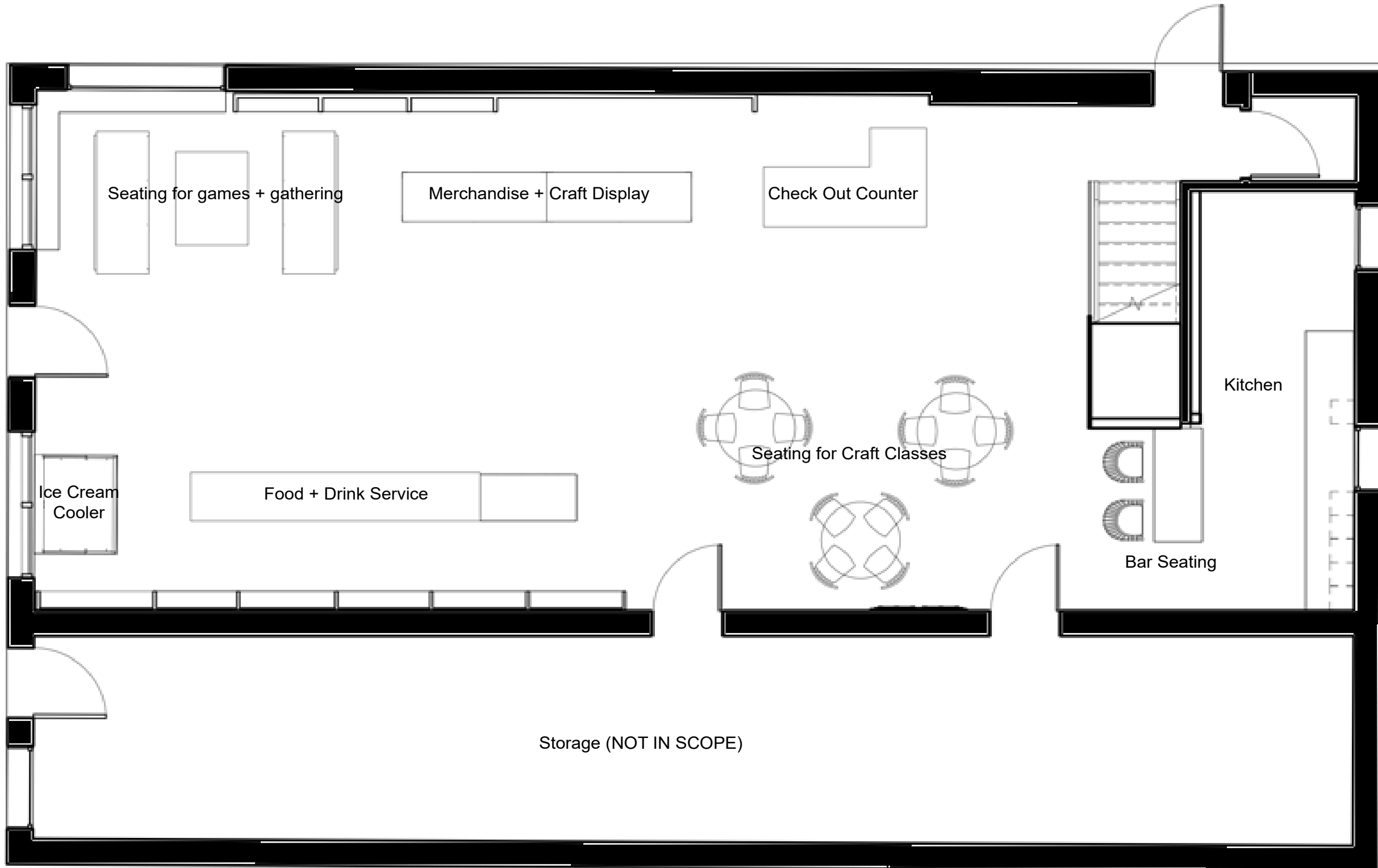
The following pages contain the floor plan, perspective, axon, and precedent images.



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0'-0" 1'-0" 3'-0" 6'-0"

Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Preliminary Design Concept 2  
Floor Plan  
October 16, 2018



Floyd Country Store Display



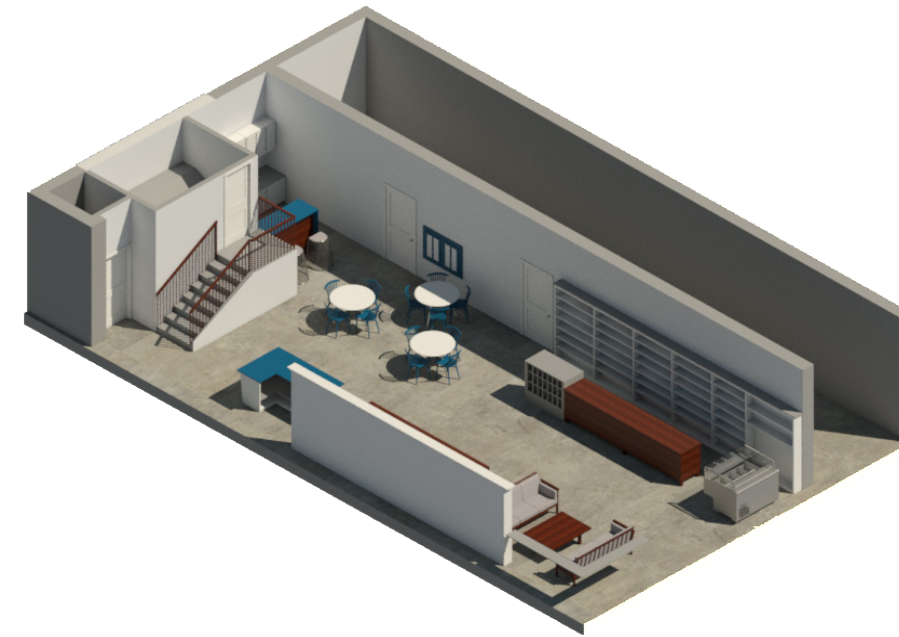
Floyd Country Store Checkout and Retail Display



Floyd Country Store Food Display



Store View from Front Door



Overall Design Layout

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Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Preliminary Design Concept 2  
Perspective, Axon, and Precedent Images  
October 16, 2018

**PART 3:  
APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX**

**Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Executive Summary**

Phase I Environmental Site  
Assessment

38

Mendota Store Property

December 3, 2018



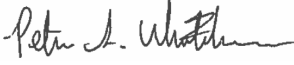
# Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Benfield Store


## APPENDIX

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment  
Mendota Store Property

### Contact Information

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### Document Information

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Mendota Store Property

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### Document History

Version	Effective Date	Description of Revision	Prepared by	Reviewed by
1.1	11/30/2018	Draft 1	Peter Whitehouse	Joe Morici, PE
1.2	12/03/2018	Final	Joe Morici, PE	Brian Kvam, PG

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## APPENDIX

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment  
Mendota Store Property

### 1 Executive Summary

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At the request of the Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) at Virginia Tech and CDAC's Brownfields Project Manager, Ms. Elizabeth Gilboy, Cardno, Inc. (Cardno) has conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of an approximately 1.9-acre property known as the Mendota Store Property (subject property). The subject property is located at 2421 Mendota Road in the unincorporated town of Mendota in Washington County, Virginia.

This Phase I ESA was performed by following the American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM) Practice E-1527-13 "Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process" developed by ASTM Subcommittee E50.02 for Commercial Real Estate Transactions. ASTM E-1527-13 also meets the All Appropriate Inquiries (AAI) standards set forth by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 40 CFR Part 312. Any exceptions to, or deletions from, this practice are described in Sections 2.4 and 9.0 of this report.

The objective of this Phase I ESA was to identify Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs), Historical Recognized Environmental Conditions (HRECs), and Controlled Recognized Environmental Conditions (CRECs), as defined in ASTM Practice E-1527-13 with regard to the subject property and to evaluate potential future liability associated with past or current practices onsite.

This Phase I ESA included the following types of investigation:

- A records review of all pertinent regulatory agency databases and applicable local records;
  - An EDR environmental database search report;
  - Aerial photographs from 1956, 1976, 1998, 2005, 2009, 2012, and 2016;
  - Historical city directory reports from 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2014; and
  - Historical Topographic Maps dated 1897, 1902, 1935, 1938, 1939, 1968, 1976, and 2013;
- Interviews with persons familiar with the subject property; and,
- Site reconnaissance to inspect the subject property for evidence of RECs conducted by Mr. Joe Morici of Cardno on September 11, 2018.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were not available for the subject property. This assessment has revealed no evidence of RECs in connection with the subject property except the following:

- The historical presence of two (2) former gasoline underground storage tanks (USTs) of approximately 1,000-gallon capacity with documented petroleum release is considered an HREC.



## MEETING NOTES

### Stakeholder Input Session: September 11, 2018

Benfield Grocery Store  
Mendota, VA

#### “The Store” for 100 Years – Welcoming environment

Goal: open year round, but may have to settle for seasonal

- In the past, checkers and cards (rook) usually played in kitchen area – around fire place
- Water and coca cola were under the window
- Ice cream was visible on the right when you first walk in
- Glass counters parallel to walls to display and stand behind
  - Candy ‘bowls’ on top
- Hole in tin ceiling
  - Shotgun
- Keep old wood/coolers/shelves
- Want the windows to look like the store again
  - “Mendota is a cool place, it’s a friendly place”
- River floods
  - “The water was so high that you could dip your feet in the water while sitting on the railroad tracks”
- Want to provide boxed lunches
  - Will give visitors a reason to linger longer in the area
- Collect/rent baskets for lunches
- The Store was the community “epicenter” during floods (bowl of soup)
- Seating – restaurants – not allowed more than 16 people
  - Patio seating is preferred
- Original scale and cash register to be used
- Mendota Mementos (designs for shirts etc.)
- Food to sell: Sandwiches/energy bars/ice cream
- Supplies to sell: first aid, socks?
- Create a craft/teaching center
  - Ex. Basket weaving classes
- Would like to have bicycle racks for people using the Mendota Trail
- Seasonal decorations
- Ice box has false back
- Keep the historical and quaint character
- Can change floor color/pattern – originally grey now red but faded
- Original shelving was grey, AVOID grey
- Horse and Doll House will stay
- Light fixtures will stay
- 3 compartment sink is needed (for handwashing)
- Screened door will stay

## MEETING NOTES

### Preliminary Presentation: October 16, 2018

Benfield Grocery Store  
Mendota, VA

#### General:

- Food should be consolidated into one area, preferably near the back
- All food will be premade and ordered to-go. As such, there is not a need for a cold display case
- “You-are-here” mural; would like in some form. Might be best to be incorporated as a mural on the east exterior wall of the building in conjunction with the patio
- Music: would like to have an informal area that is suitable for playing music
- Convenience goods: locate in back of store on the west side
- Lighting: no fluorescent fixtures
- Checkout counter: put on the right about halfway. This will be more convenient for whoever is working there. If possible, use the checkout counter/area as a way of blocking public entry to the storage room area.
- Add:
  - Ceiling fans
  - Small cold storage for pre-packaged, resale goods (for things not made in the store like soft drinks, ice cream, etc.)
- Only one person will be working at a time so easy access from kitchen to check out counter is important

#### Concept 1:

##### Concept Outline

- Concept 1 redesigns The Store of Mendota, VA into a space that houses both areas for the current community to gather, and areas that invite the trail visitors to learn about Mendota and get souvenirs and food during their adventures.

##### Likes

- Layout is inviting
- Informal gathering in the southwest corner

##### Dislikes

- Ice cream cooler should be moved away from the front windows; in the past, the sun coming through has caused issues with keeping the contents cool enough
- Change
  - Flooring is not interesting

## MEETING NOTES

### Concept 2:

#### Concept Outline

- The main inspiration for this concept was the basket-renting services and weaving classes that are being considered by the owners. The floor plan was based on a weave-like grid, and the American white oak and pine materials were chosen based on Virginian baskets.

#### Likes

- Long serving counter across the rear of the store, below the “The Store” sign
- Basket-weave floor design
- Color concept with red accents
- “The Store” sign
- Awning on the front of the building
  - o Will need to consult with VA Dept. of Historic Resources if historic tax credits are used

#### Dislikes

- Lack of casual seating area
- Change
  - o Location of check out counter
  - o Add couches

## Copper Beech 1920s Building Renovation Project

### Location

-Bellport, New York

### Background

- Built in the 1920s as a movie theater
- Converted to a grocery store in the 1930s
- Renovated in 2016 by Thomas O' Brien and Dan Fink to sell local and vintage goods

### Design Elements

- Reused the original paint shades of pale green, dark green, and gentle pink
- Kept the existing tin ceiling
- Kept the original checkout counter
- Used canvas walls to partition the store
- Evokes the romantic feeling and easy spirit of vintage artist studios
- Aesthetically inspired by the photographs in the book *The Artist in His Studio*
- May appear disorganized to those unfamiliar with the aesthetic inspiration
- Wanted to emphasize food, friends, and creating through product selection
- Strives to bring back the cornerstone of family-run stores

### Applications to Mendota

- Both projects were built in the same decade and have similar features (i.e. tin ceiling)
- Creates a new space while utilizing existing elements
- Supports the community by selling and displaying local goods



Store Entry and Color Choice



Storefront Displays



Interior Displays - Organized Chaos

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/thomas-obrien-dan-fink-renovate-historic-new-england-style-building>



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Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Case Studies

Copper Beech General Store; Bellport, New York

October 16, 2018

# Floyd Country Store

Location: Floyd, VA

## Background

- Opened doors in 1910
- Restored in 2007
- Served as the community meeting place
- Visitors come to play music, engage in a game of checkers or rook, and eat homemade food
- Well known for 'Friday Night Jamboree'
- Sells merchandise in the back and diner style food in the front
- Centralized stage and dance floor
- Local goods, crafts, and products sold

## Design Elements:

- Clear division of space between food, merchandise, and apparel
- Barrels used for display purposes
- Built-in shelving along walls
- Ceiling mounted signage
- Tiled Ceiling

## Application to Mendota:

- Layout of spaces
- Mix of old and new displays that pull in character value
- Built-in shelving use and organization of store
- Wayfinding techniques



Storefront Window Displays



Storage and Displays



Gathering Area



Ceiling-Mounted Wayfinding



Displays Location and Relationship to Others

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Mendota, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan  
for the Benfield Store

Case Studies  
Floyd Country Store; Floyd, VA  
October 16, 2018

## Old Riverton Store

Location: Riverton, Kansas

### Background

- Opened doors in 1923
  - Interior has remained relatively untouched since 1925
  - Divided into two sections: the commercial store and the residential area
  - The former living room now displays souvenirs
  - Mainly operates as a grocery store and deli

### Design Elements:

- Tiled Ceiling
- Painted Interior
- Nods to Route 66

### Application to Mendota:

- Color usage
- Vintage displays and signs
- Prevalence of ceiling pattern

### Things to avoid:

- Overcrowded displays
- Use of plastic furniture for seating
- Carpet Flooring



Original Store Layout



Seating Area



Original Store Exterior



Existing Store Layout



Existing Store Entrance and Signage



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Old Riverton Store; Riverton, Kansas  
October 16, 2018