

Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design



Prepared for the Dante Community Association
August 2017

Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Project funding provided through:



15UCF26



Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

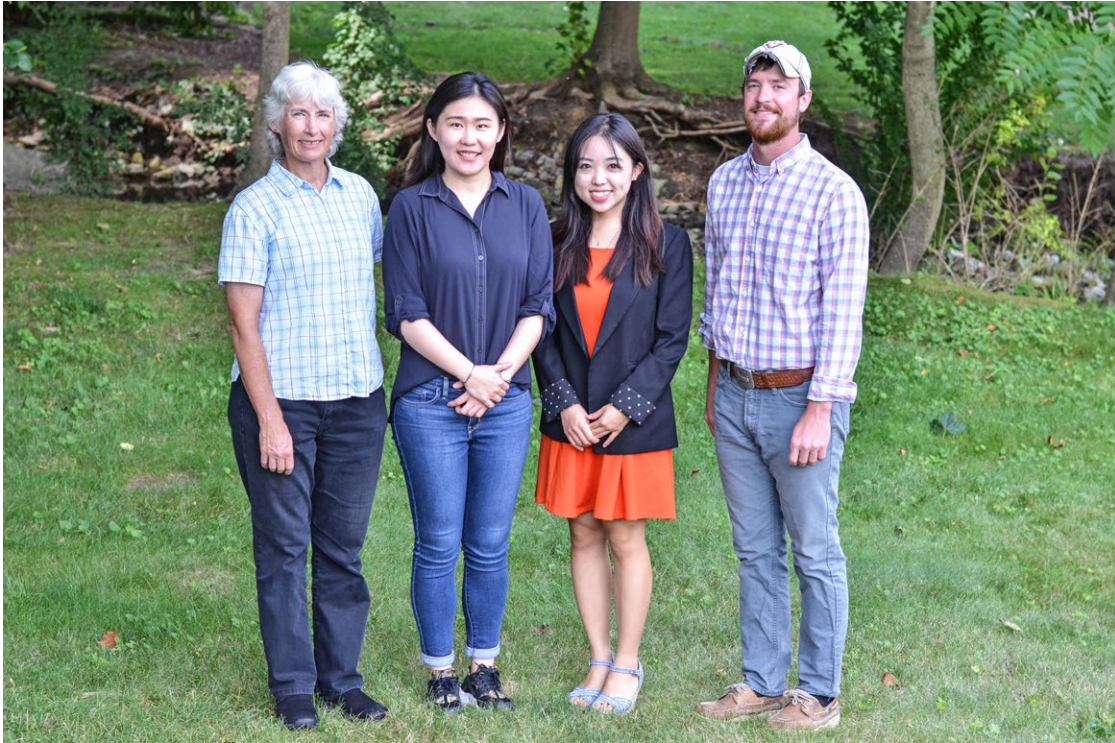
Project Team

Elizabeth Gilboy
Director

Xiaofei Shi
Landscape Designer

Nick Proctor
Project Manager

Boram Kim
Landscape Designer



CDAC team members (left to right):
Elizabeth Gilboy, Xiaofei Shi, Boram Kim, Nick Proctor

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.

Community Design Assistance Center
101 South Main Street, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
p: 540.231.5644 f: 540.231.6089
<http://www.cdac.arch.vt.edu>

Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

Jarred Glass

Dante Community Association

Carla Glass

Dante Community Association

Jason Gullett

Dante Community Association

Lou Wallace

Russell County Board of Supervisor, member

and

Those who volunteered time for the betterment of their community

Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Description

Project Overview	6
Project Location	7
Town Background	10
Design Process	11
Site Visit	12

Part 1: Final Design Concept

Final Design Concept

Design Description	14
Master Plan	16
Phasing Plan	17
Perspective 1: Entry Park, Town Welcome Sign, and Native Plantings	18
Perspective 2: Coal Miners Memorial and Renovated Depot	19
Perspective 3: Lick Creek Daylighting and Pedestrian Bridge	20
Wayfinding and Street Furnishings	21
Plant Palette: Trees	22

Part 2: Preliminary Design Concepts

Preliminary Design Concept 1

Design Description	25
Master Plan	27
Perspective: Entry Park and Renovated Depot	28
Section: Lick Creek Daylighting and Precedent Images	29

Preliminary Design Concept 2

Design Description	30
Master Plan	32
Perspective: Renovated Depot and Community Welcome Sign	33
Town Signage Options and Coal Miners Memorial Plaza	34

Part 3: Appendix

Meeting Notes

Community Input Session: May 25, 2017	36
Preliminary Presentation: June 17, 2017	38

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Overview

This project was part two of a two-part project for the Dante community toward developing a conceptual downtown master plan that featured public open space.

For part one, in January 2017 the Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture Program, with funding support from a Virginia Department of Forestry grant and from The Richard G. Gibbons Public Landscapes Planning and Design award, held a charrette to begin generating a host of ideas for short-term and long-term actions to improve public open space located by the former trail depot for use by Dante residents and visitors. Second through fifth-year landscape architecture students participated in the charrette.

The charrette addressed public landscape issues and opportunities in Dante. Students and faculty met with Dante and Russell County representatives to learn about the town and its rich social, cultural, economic, and environmental heritage as well as its current challenges and opportunities. Student groups were tasked with identifying and investigating options for community revitalization using public open space.

6

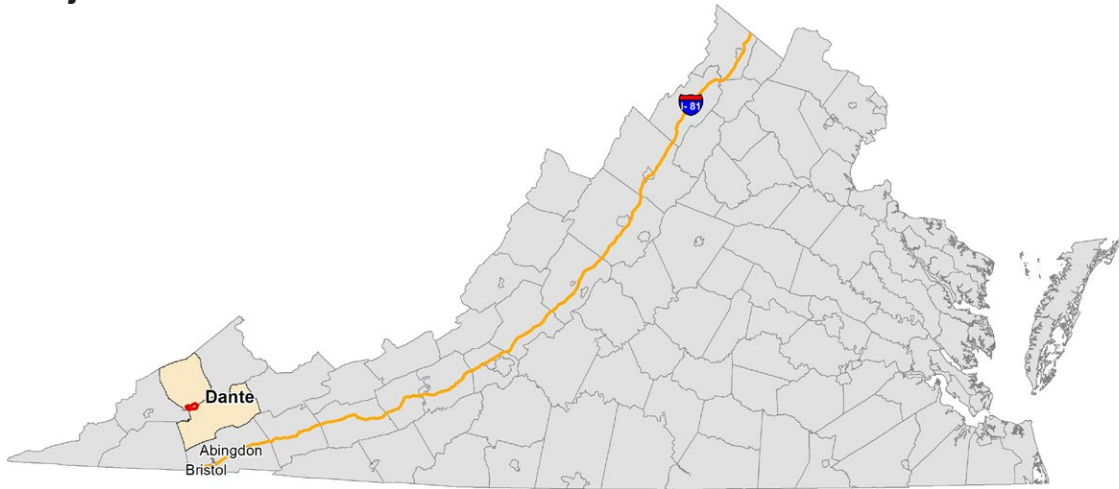
After a week of intensive work, each of the ten student teams developed a themed concept for the downtown Dante area. These were presented to Dante representatives in Blacksburg.

The purpose of the second phase of work, which is summarized in this report, was to work with the community to take the best themes and ideas from the ten teams of student work and create two refined alternative conceptual designs for both the downtown area and the open space, present those for feedback, then revise into one final conceptual master plan for the downtown area, one for the open space as a park, and planting recommendations

Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location

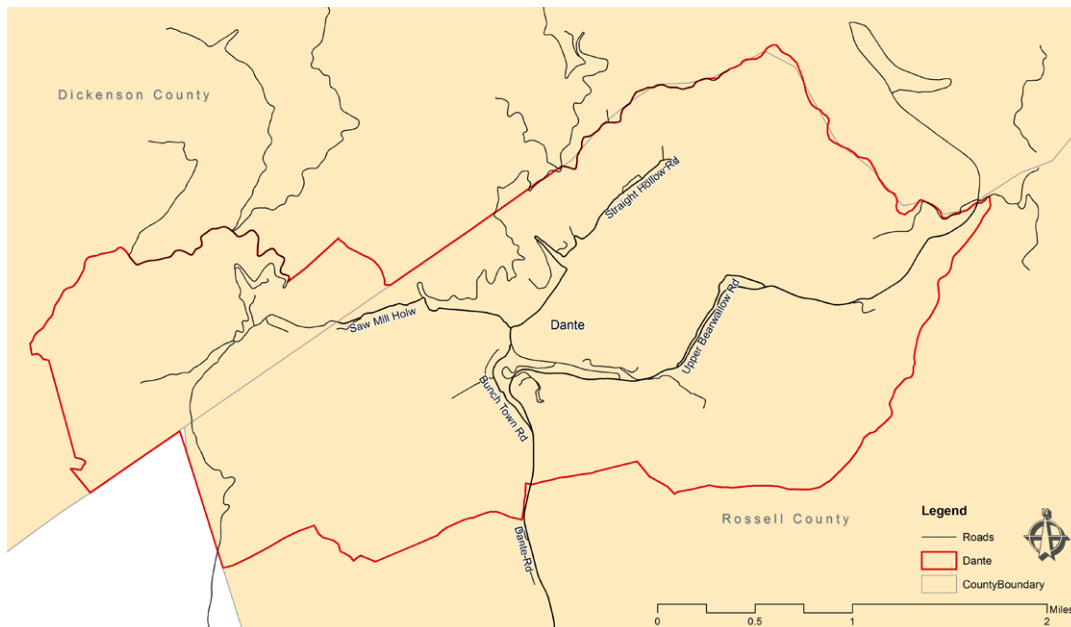


Dante, VA is located in Russell County in southwest Virginia (above), and is approximately ten minutes north of St. Paul, VA, fifty minutes west of Abingdon, VA, and forty minutes east of Norton and Wise, VA (below).



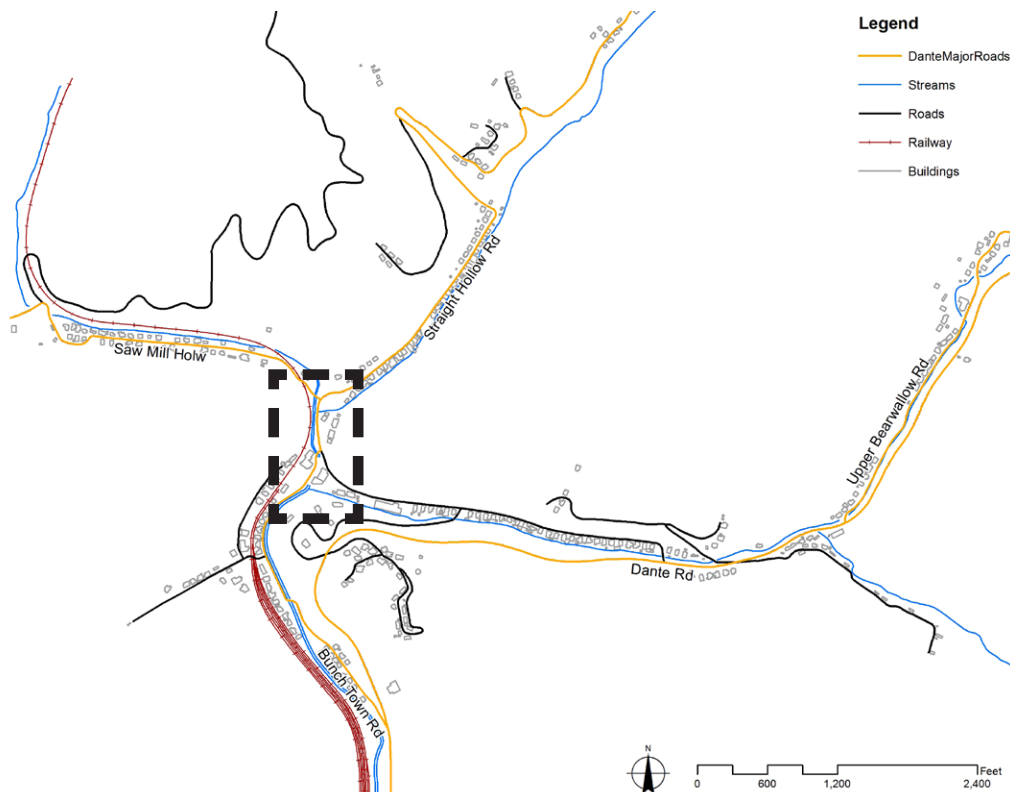
Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

PROJECT DESCRIPTION



While Dante's town limits span seven square miles (above), CDAC's design efforts were focused primarily where the Saw Mill Hollow, Straight Hollow, and Upper/ Lower Bearwallow Roads come together (below) in the community's core (dashed box).

8



PROJECT DESCRIPTION



The design process focused on the downtown region depicted above.

- A. Depot building
- B. Shared use community open space
- C. Concrete pad
- D. Stage
- E. Post office/ apartment building
- F. to Dante Rescue Squad building
- G. Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum
- H. Former steam building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Town Background

Dante was originally called “Turkeyfoot” due to the confluence of three hollows. Originally settled in the late 1700s and early 1800s by western frontiersmen and farmers, explosive growth occurred in the early 1900s with the discovery and exploitation of numerous bituminous coal seams. Southern industrialist George L. Carter made it the northern terminus of the Clinchfield Railroad and the headquarters of the Clinchfield Coal Company, which began to mine the nearby hollows during the early part of the 20th century. Immigrants from Germany, Hungary, Greece, Poland, and other central European countries flocked to the area. In 1912, Sandy Ridge, which lies immediately to the north of Dante, was punctured by the Sandy Ridge Tunnel and allowed the Clinchfield Railroad to extend all the way to Elkhorn City, Kentucky¹.

During its heyday in the 1950s, Dante had 6,000 residents, a hotel, a rail depot, an auto dealership, and numerous shops. The coal seams surrounding the town were largely exhausted by the mid 1960s and were closed in favor of new mines such as Moss #3 in Duty, Virginia. The last area mines closed in the late 1970s after mining the combined Jawbone and Tiller seams to a height in excess of 30 feet of clean, refinable coal. With the loss of the coal economy, the town began a steep economic decline. Clinchfield coal began selling off the houses it rented to miners in the late 1940s. Between 1956 and 1978, the town’s hotel, dress shop, and Store B (a major meeting space) all closed. Pittston, who purchased Clinchfield Coal, moved its headquarters to Lebanon, VA in 1972².

In 2016, however, a renewed interest from its residents prompted community organizations to begin discussions on a path to revitalization. CSX Transportation still operates the Dante Yard and the Clinchfield Coal Company offices are now apartments¹.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Process

The design process began with a town visit and community meeting on May 25, 2017. During that visit the CDAC team facilitated a discussion with over forty five community members in order to reaffirm the community's vision, define parameters to measure success, and what specific design elements they felt would move the community closer to achieving their long term revitalization. Photographs, early sketches, and input from the community members, combined with mapping, created a comprehensive foundation that the CDAC team used to develop two refined conceptual master plans.

The team returned to Dante on June 17, 2017 to present two preliminary design concepts. CDAC's presentation preceded a playground equipment selection event on the same day where community members selected specific pieces of equipment to place in the park. Following the presentation, community members were encouraged to provide feedback about what they (dis)liked and what they thought might have been missing in each of the two concepts.

The team revised the two preliminary design concepts into a final conceptual downtown master plan and park design, which was presented to the Dante community on July 10, 2017.

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



CDAC project manager Nick Proctor (right) summarizes community members' remarks during a May 25th community input session.

Project Description

Site Visit

The CDAC team visited Dante three times over the course of the project, beginning with a community input session held on May 25, 2017. During this visit CDAC had the opportunity to visit several key sites including the Dante Rescue building, the downtown area (including the stage, open space, and depot), surrounding residential housing, and the Arty Lee school property where recreational amenities are located. The CDAC team visited important historical destinations as well such as the Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum and the Dante Coal Miners Memorial located across HW 63 next to the Dante Volunteer Fire Department's building.



Landscape designers Xiaofei Shi (left) and Boram Kim (right) walk the downtown area to determine where the town playground and stage expansion might be implemented.



Volunteers of the Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum point out the key buildings of Dante's former downtown using a scaled model of the community from the 1940s.

PART 1: FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Design Description

Anchored by the renovated depot on the south and an expanded stage on the north, the final design concept reinvigorates Dante's downtown and park. The Dante community will find organized opportunities for social gathering in the new central lawn and entry park, a playground with four pieces of equipment, outdoor seating next to the renovated depot, and a picnic shelter across from the apartment building. A proposed community Christmas tree can become a central focus to holiday celebrations and as part of the long-standing Santa Train tradition.

Community Playground

In conjunction with CDAC's preliminary design concept presentation, community members selected four pieces of playground equipment; a swing set, a climbing feature, a combination kit, and a spiral slide. The community is expected to purchase the playground equipment through a KaBOOM! grant recently awarded to Dante. This playground equipment suggests that approximately 5,000 ft² of low impact surface material be placed under and around the equipment as fall protection.

Renovated Dante Depot and Business Development

The final design concept encourages new business growth with a renovated depot, parking for visiting food trucks from out-of-town, and an expanded stage for special events such as live music. The renovated depot is a strategic location for a new business such as an outfitter or deli. Due to its location, the depot is a great building to introduce visitors to the community with visitor information, outdoor seating, public restrooms, and the option for limited-access shower facilities. The showers can be opened on a case-by-case basis for trail riders or service crews that are assisting people in area.

Coal Miners Memorial Plaza

Dante has a colorful history associated with the long legacy of coal mining in Virginia's Appalachian Mountains. The final design concept proposes that Dante's existing coal miners memorial, currently located at the Dante Volunteer Fire Department, be relocated to the downtown area adjacent to the renovated depot. In addition to relocating it to a more central location, a coal miner statue sitting on a bench along with two flagpoles are added to the relocated stone memorial. Community members and visitors are encouraged to sit on the bench with the statue for an interactive experience. It is common for people to take pictures posing with this type of life-size statue, creating a unique memento to take away from the visit. Incorporating the statue into a social media promotion strategy, such as dedicated hash tags, can expand the community's digital marketing potential in a cost effective way.

Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are a unique opportunity to encourage native plantings and storm water best management practices. The area adjacent to the Coal Miners Memorial

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Plaza is currently prone to standing water that has been enhanced with perennial rain gardens. This area of new planting is a low maintenance solution to a storm water problem and brings year-round colorful flowers to Dante's downtown. Interpretive panels that explain how rain gardens work and their environmental benefits in managing storm water runoff can supplement the plantings.

Expanded Stage

On the opposite end of the park from the renovated depot, an expanded community stage provides more space for larger bands and special community events. Removable dance platforms that are stored underneath the stage provide a temporary dancing surface. Made of multiple interlocking units, the temporary stage can be configured in a variety of formations depending on the specific needs of the event. Spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs to enjoy the restored grass lawn in front of the stage or can utilize the proposed shelter that is proposed nearby.

Lick Creek Daylighting

The final design concept integrates environmental learning throughout the site in a variety of ways. Located across Lower Bearwallow Road from the expanded stage, a portion of Lick Creek is daylighted. Daylighting is the process of uncovering a stream that has been placed into a sealed culvert or drainage system underground. Lick Creek becomes channelized at the intersection of Lower Bearwallow and Straight Hollow Roads, removing any opportunity for the community to interact with the stream. As seen in Perspective 2 on Page 18, a portion of the paving is removed to allow visual access to the stream. Steps and an ADA ramp allow people to get closer to the water in a unique way. A dedicated crosswalk and pedestrian bridge that repurposes a portion of existing pavement connects the expanded stage to Lower Bearwallow Road's new sidewalks, allowing pedestrians to safely move about the community.

Following are the final conceptual master plan, perspectives, precedent images, signage options, and planting palette.

Note:

- All soils should be tested and appropriately amended before planting.
- Potential granting funding annual deadlines:
 - Department of Housing and Community Development:
 - Planning Grants; rolling, through ~September
 - Department of Housing and Community Development:
 - Community Development Block Grant; March
 - Virginia Tobacco Commission; October
 - Appalachian Regional Commission; September



Parking Capacity: approximately 80 total spaces;
 10 spaces around Depot, 20 spaces between Park & Apartment Building, 5 spaces at the Museum, 5 spaces at former Steam Building,
 10 spaces behind Apartment Building, 30 spaces between Rescue Building & Community Center.



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept
Master Plan



Potential Granting Funding Annual Deadlines

Department of Housing and Community Development: Planning Grants; rolling, through ~September
 Department of Housing and Community Development: Community Development Block Grant; March

Virginia Tobacco Commission; October
 Appalachian Regional Commission; September



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept
Phasing Plan



The entry park provides a welcoming introduction to Dante with a stone welcome sign, street lighting with hanging community banners, renovated depot and parking, and a walking trail that connects pedestrians to other parts of the downtown.



Entry sign with attached lamps



Street lamp + banner combination



Wildflower Planting Along Entry Road



Park Bench Along Pathway



Open Lawn + Social Gathering



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept
Perspective 1: Entry Park, Town Welcome Sign, and Native Plantings



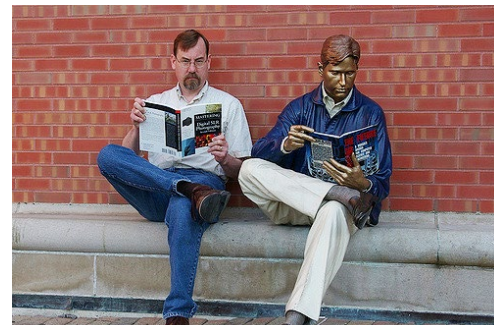
Outdoor seating, a multi-age playground and relocated Coal Miners Memorial (moved from its current location at the Dante Volunteer Fire Department) anchor the south portion of the park. A sitting coal miner statue provides a unique addition to the Town's current memorial that is both commemorative yet interactive and playful as people visit the park daily.



Renovated Depot



Relocated Memorial with proposed Statue



Interacting with bench statue



Playground



Outdoor Seating



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept

Perspective 2: Coal Miners Memorial and Renovated Depot



Daylighting Lick Creek is a creative way to utilize an existing natural asset in a way that creates a new attraction to Dante's downtown. Community members get a unique perspective of the creek with a viewing platform, accessed by steps or an ADA ramp, while a pedestrian bridge and crosswalk connects the park (right) to Lower Bearwallow Road (left). A half-court basketball area and picnic shelter are two of several new destinations.



Creek Access + Steps + Deck



ADA Ramp



ADA Sidewalk & Pedestrian Crossing



Pedestrian Bridge over Creek



Picnic Shelter



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept

Perspective 3: Lick Creek Daylighting and Pedestrian Bridge



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.



Wayfinding and Street Furnishings (left to right):

Pedestrian-scale street lamp (12' tall) with double hanging banners (orange), street lamp with hanging banner and flower basket combination option, street lamp with double hanging banners (black), town entry sign (4' tall) with attached lamps (stone, iron, and plantings)

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept
Wayfinding and Street Furnishings



American Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*
Easily grown in average, medium to wet, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates light shade. Prefers rich, humusy, consistently moist soils. Generally tolerant of most urban pollutants.

Height: 75 to 100 feet
Spread: 75 to 100 feet
Bloom Time: April
Bloom Description: Yellow (male) and red (female)
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium to wet
Maintenance: High
Suggested Use: Shade Tree, Rain Garden



Bald Cypress, *Taxodium distichum* var. *distichum*
Easily grown in average, medium to wet, moisture retentive but reasonably well-drained soils in full sun. A large ornamental tree for parks or large lawns. Good selection for growing in wet soils either in low spots or near water.

Height: 50 to 70 feet
Spread: 20 to 45 feet
Bloom Time: Non-flowering
Bloom Description: Brown
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium to wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Rain Garden



Black gum, *Nyssa sylvatica*
Easily grown in average, medium to wet soils in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist, acidic soils. Tolerates poorly-drained soils and can grow in standing water.

Height: 30 to 50 feet
Spread: 20 to 30 feet
Bloom Time: May to June
Bloom Description: Greenish white
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree, Street Tree, Rain Garden



Blackhaw Viburnum, *Viburnum prunifolium*
Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Tolerates drought. Prune immediately after flowering since flower buds form in summer for the following year.

Height: 12 to 15 feet
Spread: 6 to 12 feet
Bloom Time: May to June
Bloom Description: White
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Dry to medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Hedge



Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*
Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Prefers moist well-drained loams, but adapts to a wide range of soil conditions. Good drought tolerance. A large shade tree for very large lawns or parks.

Height: 60 to 80 feet
Spread: 60 to 80 feet
Bloom Time: April
Bloom Description: Yellowish-green
Sun: Full sun
Water: Dry to medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree, Rain Garden



Eastern Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*
Specimen or small groups. Lawns, shrub borders, woodland margins, or along patios. Street tree or lawn tree. Attractive in naturalized settings. Avoid wet or poorly drained soils.

Height: 20 to 30 feet
Spread: 25 to 35 feet
Bloom Time: April
Bloom Description: Pink
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Flowering Tree



Kentucky Coffeetree, *Gymnocladus dioica*
Best grown in moist, organically rich, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates poorer soils and drought, but void heavy clays. Also adapts well to urban conditions. Suckers to form colonies in the wild. Good landscape tree for large lawns and parks.

Height: 60 to 80 feet
Spread: 40 to 55 feet
Bloom Time: May to June
Bloom Description: Greenish-white
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree, Rain Garden



Norway Spruce, *Picea abies*
Easily grown in average, acidic, evenly moist, well-drained soils in full sun. Established plants have some tolerance for dryish soils. Evergreen tree for large lawns, parks or woodland areas. Popular for decorating and using for town holiday trees.

Height: 40 to 60 feet
Spread: 25 to 30 feet
Bloom Time: Non-flowering
Bloom Description: Non-flowering
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Town Holiday Tree



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Final Design Concept: Plant Palette

Trees (1 of 2)



Osage Orange ('Wichita'/'Whiteshield'), *Maclura pomifera*
Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Prefers uniformly moist soils, but tolerates both dry and wet conditions. Also tolerates poor soils, drought, heat, cold and wind.
Height: 35 to 60 feet
Spread: 35 to 60 feet
Bloom Time: June
Bloom Description: Green
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Dry to medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Hedge, Shade Tree



Sugar Maple, *Acer saccharum*
Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Best in fertile, slightly acidic, moist soils in full sun. Excellent specimen tree for the lawn or parks with beautiful fall color.
Height: 40 to 80 feet
Spread: 30 to 60 feet
Bloom Time: April
Bloom Description: Greenish
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Medium
Suggested Use: Shade Tree



Paw Paw, *Asimina triloba*
Easily grown in average, medium to wet, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist, acidic, fertile soils. Naturalize in a native plant or wild garden, or grow in a shrub border or wood land margin. Effective in damp areas along ponds or streams.
Height: 15 to 30 feet
Spread: 15 to 30 feet
Bloom Time: April to May
Bloom Description: Purple
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Rain Garden



Swamp White Oak, *Quercus bicolor*
Easily grown in average, medium to wet, acidic soil in full sun. Specimen, street tree, lawn tree. A good tree for wet ground and low spots.
Height: 50 to 60 feet
Spread: 50 to 60 feet
Bloom Time: April
Bloom Description: Yellowish-green
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium to wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree, Street Tree, Rain Garden



Serviceberry, *Amelanchier arborea*
Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Best in shrub borders, or in woodland, naturalized or native plant gardens, especially with dark or shaded back-drops which tend to highlight the form, flowers and fall color of the plant.
Height: 15 to 25 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Bloom Time: March to April
Bloom Description: White
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Flowering Tree



Witch Hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*
Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Best flowering in full sun. Prefers moist, acidic, organically rich soils. Little pruning is required. Prune in early spring if necessary. Shrub borders, woodland gardens.
Height: 15 to 20 feet
Spread: 15 to 20 feet
Bloom Time: October to December
Bloom Description: Yellow
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Hedge, Rain Garden



Shingle Oak, *Quercus imbricaria*
Best grown in rich, humusy, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. Adapts to a wide range of soils including dry ones. A medium shade tree for large lawns or parks. Street tree. May be pruned for use as a screen or hedge.
Height: 40 to 60 feet
Spread: 40 to 60 feet
Bloom Time: April
Bloom Description: Yellowish-green
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree



Yellowwood, *Cladrastis kentukea*
Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates some dry soils once established. Excellent small tree for lawns, particularly on smaller properties. Also may be planted near patios and terraces. May be effectively grouped.
Height: 30 to 50 feet
Spread: 40 to 55 feet
Bloom Time: May
Bloom Description: White
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree, Flowering Tree



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

**PART 2:
PRELIMINARY
DESIGN CONCEPTS**

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT 1

Design Description

Dante is surrounded by a wealth of natural assets which preliminary design concept 1 uses as a primary inspiration in organizing the Dante's downtown and park. Daylighting a portion of Lick Creek north of the apartment building brings both environmental learning and unique social gathering opportunities. A large central lawn provides ample space for a community playground, informal play, and special events at the stage. The renovated depot on the south edge of the park welcomes new business opportunities and an inviting entrance corridor into the downtown. Natural assets, active play, and business development come together to revitalize Dante's downtown.

Renovated Dante Depot:

The existing depot's historic character and central location in the downtown justifies renovating the structure so that it is suitable for a new business. Due in part because of regional outdoor recreation and local food initiatives, an outfitter or deli would be well received. The renovated depot is also one of the first signature buildings seen upon arriving and can be a place for visitors to park and become oriented with what Dante has to offer. Outdoor seating allows people to enjoy their meal outside next to the playground and picnic area.

25

Playground and Picnic Area:

Next to the depot is a new playground that is approximately 4,000 ft² in size. This designated area is large enough to place multiple pieces of playground equipment so that different age groups can play in the same general area. The outdoor seating on the north end of the renovated depot can be used by parents to monitor the playground within close proximity.

Beside the playground is a grassed picnic area that spans from the outdoor seating to the renovated basketball court. This lawn space has walking trails on either side along with charcoal picnic grills for community members to use. Maintaining this lawn as flexible, open space provides a location for less structured recreation activities away from the playground or basketball court.

Basketball Court and Shelter:

On the north side of the playground along town Road is a shelter that can be used for picnics, casual gathering, or for special events throughout the year such as the Dante Reunion or the Santa Train holiday celebration. During the summer months, the shelter is a great location to sit in the shade out of the summer heat or a place to take a break from playing basketball.

A half-court basketball court is adjacent to the proposed picnic shelter by resurfacing the existing concrete slab. The court is both reduced in size and reoriented to face the renovated depot. Reorienting the court increases the overall safety of playing basketball at this location by reducing the risk of run-away basketballs that can

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT 1

accidentally end up on the CSX-owned railroad or in the street.

Expanded Stage and Lawn:

Appalachian mountain music has always played a central role in community gathering, particular since the introduction of The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. The importance of traditional music was mentioned during Dante's community input session on May 25, 2017. Dante's existing stage is expanded in order to accommodate larger bands and incorporates a sectional dance platform. The sectional dance platform can be configured in a variety of layouts depending on the event and can be stored underneath the stage when not in use. Spectators are able to watch the performance from the new lawn in front of the stage (currently a gravel parking lot) by bringing lawn chairs or benches.

Lick Creek Daylighting:

Daylighting a creek is the process of uncovering a stream that had previously been enclosed in a pipe or culvert, tucking it out of sight underground. Daylighting restores the stream's natural bank condition and often results in reduced localized flooding, improved ecological health of the water, and unique opportunities to view the waterway.

Seen on the north side of the apartment building (letter K) a portion of Lick Creek is daylighted by removing specific segments of the existing parking area. A pedestrian bridge is created by re-purposing a portion of the existing parking while removing surface materials from either side to expose the creek underneath. Community members can access a lower viewing deck using either a set of steps or an ADA ramp.

Following are the preliminary design concept 1 master plan, perspectives, and precedent images.



Parking Capacity: about 90 space in total; 20 space around Depot, 20 space between Park & Apartment Building, 5 space at the Museum, 5 space at Steam Building; 10 space behind Apartment Building, 30 space between Rescue Building & Community Center.



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Preliminary Design Concept 1
Master Plan



An entry park and renovated depot offers residents and visitors of the Dante community a warm welcome upon arriving to the downtown area. The renovated depot is the primary destination when first arriving where people can find a new deli, visitor information, bathrooms, and parking.



community design
assistance center

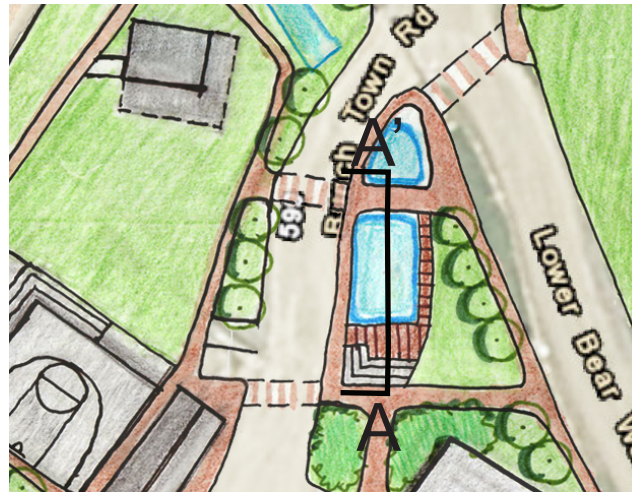
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Preliminary Design Concept 1

Perspective: Entry Park and Renovated Depot



Cross Section Locator

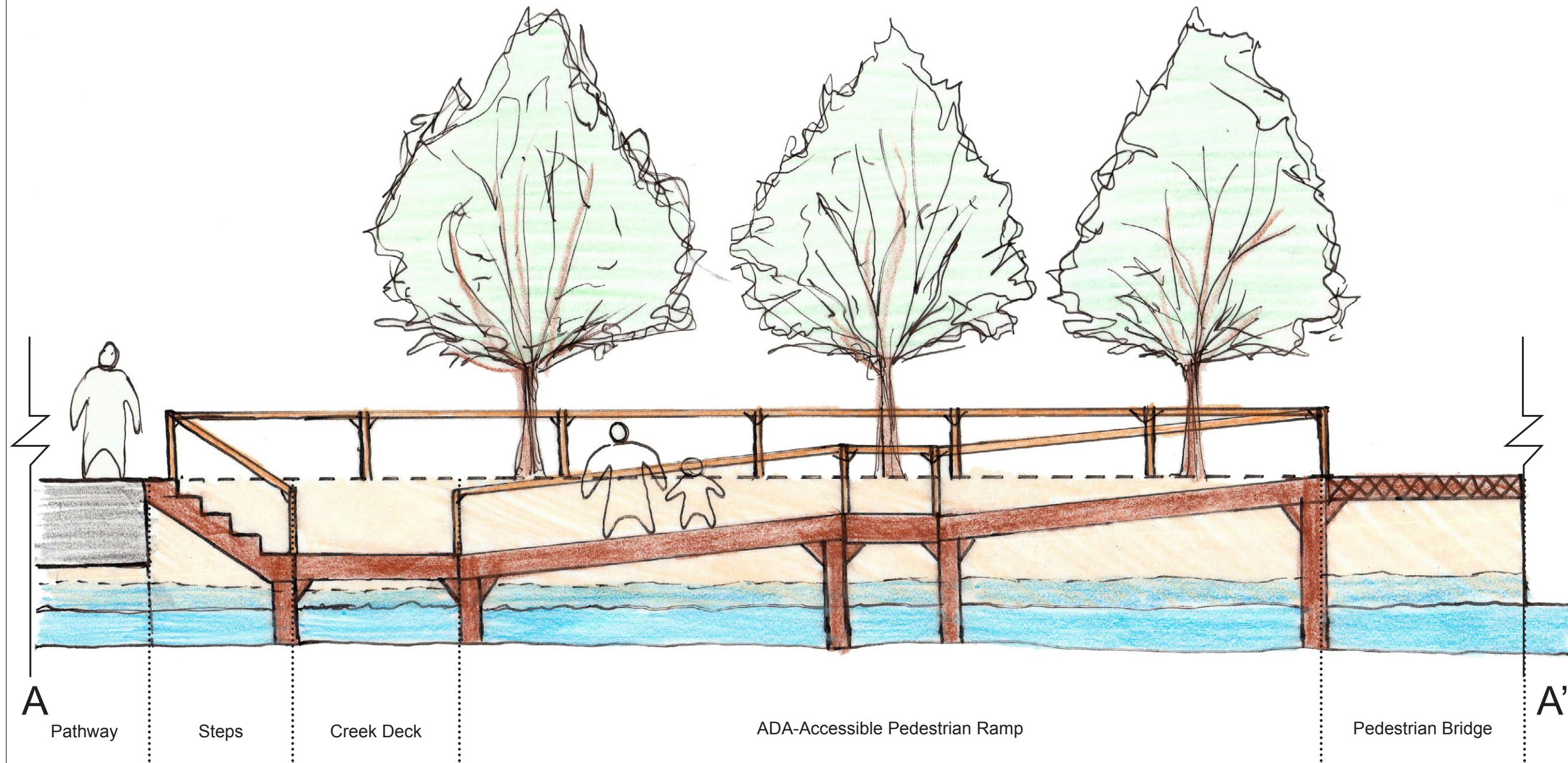


Creek Deck



ADA-Accessible Pedestrian Ramp

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.



Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Preliminary Design Concept 1

Section: Lick Creek Daylighting and Precedent Images

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT 2

Design Description

The preliminary design concept 2 focuses on the depot as a central historic element in Dante's downtown, which is renovated for new uses. Surrounding the renovated depot is an entry park, Coal Miners Memorial Plaza, and pedestrian paths. New wayfinding signage helps people get to the various destinations. A town welcome sign and a street furnishings enhance the character and welcoming atmosphere of downtown.

Entry Park and Historic Depot Plaza:

The entry park and historic depot provide a shaded pedestrian path that connects to the community park beyond the depot. The entry park is proposed in an area just to the south of the depot where there are currently two structures currently in poor condition.

The renovated historic depot building has a deli/café with outdoor seating area. Public restrooms with showers at the north end of the depot building serve both residents and visitors such as bikers or campers. A seating wall in the plaza features a proposed community Christmas tree, providing another gathering place and an opportunity to decorate a community space during the annual Santa Train event.

Wayfinding Signage and Street Furnishing Design:

The signage design reflects the identity of the community and welcomes people to the town. The Dante welcome sign uses a two-color scheme: rust orange represents the former school and black represents the town's coal heritage. The design materials and the shape of the welcome sign also reflect the town's coal mining heritage

Black pedestrian-scale street lights with double hanging banners provide a sense of community and add new color to the streetscape. One of the two banners can easily be replaced with a hanging basket to add perennial plantings. The banners can be alternated along the street as the community feels appropriate.

Main Park Area:

This area, located between the depot and the stage, serves as the main gathering area and includes a playground, flower garden, tree-shaded picnic area with picnic tables, a half-basketball court, an access area for the Santa Train, pavilion with grills, Coal Miners Memorial Plaza, open lawn space, and the stage.

The existing full basketball court is reduced in size to allow the open lawn space to be expanded. The court orientation is kept toward the railroad track so that balls will not bounce toward the street. A sliding gate within a wooden fence along the railroad provides access to the Santa Train.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT 2

Realignment of Bunchtown Road:

Additional open lawn space could be created by realigning the existing vehicular bridge at the intersection of Bunchtown Road and Lower Bear Wallow Road. A road realignment would also provide more space to extend the performance stage. Another purpose of shifting the vehicular bridge would be to align the two streets so that they intersect at traditional right angles. This would slow down vehicles that currently pick up speed coming down Straight Hollow Road, causing unsafe conditions for pedestrians.

A rain garden is proposed in an area that does not drain well along Bunchtown Road. The plants in the rain garden will help keep water from running into the main park area.

The parking area next to the rain garden could turn into an event place where food truck vendors could park. The Coal Miners' Memorial Plaza could also accommodate other vendors on adjacent paved surfaces .

Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum + Steam Building:

The museum houses a wealth of information about company's history as well as memorabilia, photos, and videos. School groups are particularly welcome to visit the museum so that students can meet miners and railroad workers and learn about life and work in the company coal town. This museum, however, lacks space to accommodate groups for workshops or seminars.

A newly proposed Coal Miners Memorial Plaza honors those who worked in the mines. This proposed Coal Miners Memorial Plaza could be a space for outdoor educational programs that relate to the Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum or special events like the Dante Reunion. A vegetative buffer is proposed between the Museum and the private properties.

The steam building across from the museum could be renovated and utilized as an educational space for the museum or accommodate business opportunities such as outfitter, restaurant, deli, café, or brewery.

Following are the preliminary design concept 2 master plan, perspectives, and wayfinding signage options.



Design Concept 2 recognizes the depot as the historic center of social and cultural life in Dante. By providing recreational, educational gathering spaces, and creating a pedestrian infrastructure network, the historic depot and the Dante Coal Miners Memorial Plaza establish themselves as central anchoring places for the daily life of the Dante community.



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Preliminary Design Concept 2
Master Plan



Perspective 3 shows the renovated historic depot plaza with Town welcome sign, an information board, and a Town Christmas tree creating a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Preliminary Design Concept 2

Perspective: Renovated Depot and Community Welcome Sign



Town Wayfinding Signage (heavy timber and metal combination)



Dante Coal Miners Memorial Plaza



Signage concepts display the identity of Dante community by incorporating Dante's coal mining heritage and displaying the community's color scheme colors (burnt orange and black).



community design
assistance center

College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Disclaimer : This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.

Dante, VA: Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

Preliminary Design Concept 2

Town Signage Options and Coal Miners Memorial Plaza

PART 3: APPENDIX

MEETING NOTES

Community Input Session: May 25, 2017

Dante Rescue Squad building ; 6:00-7:30pm
Dante, VA 24237

Community Vision

In 10-15 years, Dante is a community of...

- “Paint a Community Picture”
 - Children are playing
 - There is outdoor entertainment
 - People are gathered outdoors
 - Trees and flowers
 - Picnic Area
 - Public restrooms
 - Growth
 - Population increase
 - Diversified age range; more young people
- Entrepreneurship and new businesses
 - Deli/ Café
 - Outfitter
 - Food truck/ trailer
 - Restaurant
- Outdoor recreation
 - Fishing
 - Biking
 - Hiking
 - ATVs
 - Game room for youth and older citizens
- Community tours
 - Coal camp
 - Mining and Railroad Museum
 - History
 - Heritage
- Improved infrastructure
 - Telecommunications
 - Sidewalks
 - Town does have good roads
- Regional collaboration
 - Political support
 - Funding
 - Promotion
 - Partnership
- Strong education systems
 - Environmental education
 - Heritage: craft, music, traditional ways
- Quality housing and open space

Dante, VA:
Conceptual Downtown Master Plan and Park Design

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Existing homes are renovated, vacant lots are cleaned up
- Better utilized open space
- Historical significance
 - Historical renovations and conservation
- Health
 - Access to doctors and healthcare
 - Ample opportunities for fitness and wellness such as trails
 - There are regular events that support a healthy lifestyle (demonstrations, clinics, walk/ run events)

Dante's Downtown: Designing for Success!

Design Achievements: How success is measured for the conceptual downtown and park design

- Community collaboration; coming together; people supporting each other
- Encourages new business interest and potential
- Safe: lighting, visual access
- Vision is captured in a comprehensive graphic (final report)
- There are opportunities for social gathering
- There is a playground

MEETING NOTES

Preliminary Presentation: June 17, 2017

Stage at Dante Town Park; 11:00-12:00pm

Dante, VA 24237

Renovated Depot

- Keep: Showers for riders and recreation-goers
- Bike racks for bicyclists

Depot Plaza + Coal Miners Memorial

- Relocate the existing memorial that is located at the former rescue squad building
- Place the memorial where Concept #1: Label B is located

Christmas Tree

- Like the idea; locate it on the west side of the renovated depot and combine with the Coal Miners Memorial

Playground

- Locate in the back corner, near the depot, away from the road (Concept 1)
 - 2,500ft² - minimum
 - 5,000 ft² – planned
- The community selected four pieces of equipment from Miracle Playground Equipment
 - Fitness Structure: 714-S489J
 - Tots' Structure: 718-S167J
 - 855 Typhoon Slide with PVC Steps: Model 65-769J
 - 2-Bay Arch Swing w/ 4 Belt Seats: Model 718-852-4SJ

Rain gardens

- Design for perennials and low maintenance

Basketball court

- Scale back paving dedicated to the basketball court and keep as a half-court option (see Concept 2)

Pavilion

- Move to the south side of the park; closer to the road but provide a proper buffer
- Maintain site and audio line between the stage and the renovated Depot

Stage

- Like the stage expansion (Concept 1)

Daylighting creek

- Very well received
- Be conscious of safety and flooding concerns

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Streetscape and traffic calming:

- Keep the sidewalk bump-outs and dedicated pedestrian crosswalks

Road realignment:

- Speeding from Straight Hollow Rd. onto Bunchtown Road as drivers bear right is a legitimate concern. For now this is not a high-priority project and other traffic calming measures can be explored that can be implemented for a lower project budget.
- Consider the turning radius of emergency vehicles when refining the realignment.

Other comments:

- Add water fountain near the playground, possibly included as part of the
- Depot renovations:
 - Reduce planting that requires a lot of maintenance where possible
 - Materials; Limit wood when possible from a maintenance standpoint (for signage)