



Prepared for the Dante Community Association
February 2017

Dante, VA: Community Design Charrette

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This award provides funding for student design competitions in a Virginia community
for the Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture Program.



15UCF26



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Richard “Dick” Gibbons

Fellow, American Society of Landscape Architects
(Fellowship is conferred on individuals in recognition of exceptional accomplishments over a sustained period of time)

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Dante Community Association

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Patricia Gibson

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Carla Glass

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Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum

Virginia Tech’s Landscape Architecture Program faculty and students

and

Those who volunteered time for the betterment of their community

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VT landscape architecture students discuss design ideas with Professor Emeritus Ben Johnson (right).

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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Dante, VA: Community Design Charrette

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture (LAR) Program held the first Richard G. Gibbons Public Landscapes Planning and Design Vertical Charrette at the beginning of the spring semester 2017. All landscape architecture students from second through fifth year participated in the charrette as part of their required studio and senior project work. This endowed charrette was also supported with an Urban & Community Forestry grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry provided through the Community Design Assistance Center and funding from the town of Dante.

The charrette addressed public landscape issues and opportunities in Dante, Virginia, a historic coal town located in far southwest Virginia. Students and faculty travelled to the historic coal and rail town to meet with Dante and Dickenson 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. After a single week of intensive work, the student groups graphically and orally presented their ideas for Dante's future.

Representatives from Dante and Russell County and other university members joined the program for an open exhibition and presentation of the teams' work. Each student team gave a short overview of the open space opportunities they addressed. Later, concepts from each of the teams were on display for the entire audience throughout the studio. All were invited to circulate through the exhibition and talk with each of the student groups about their design concepts.

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The LAR Program provided posters and digital copies of the students' work for Dante representatives to share at their community meetings as they discuss and plan immediate and long-term actions to improve their public open space for use by Dante residents and visitors.



Virginia Tech landscape architecture students unveiled their teams' concepts before inviting university faculty, Dante community members, and guests to hear about each team's specific design concepts.

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. Clinfield 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 Clinfield 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.

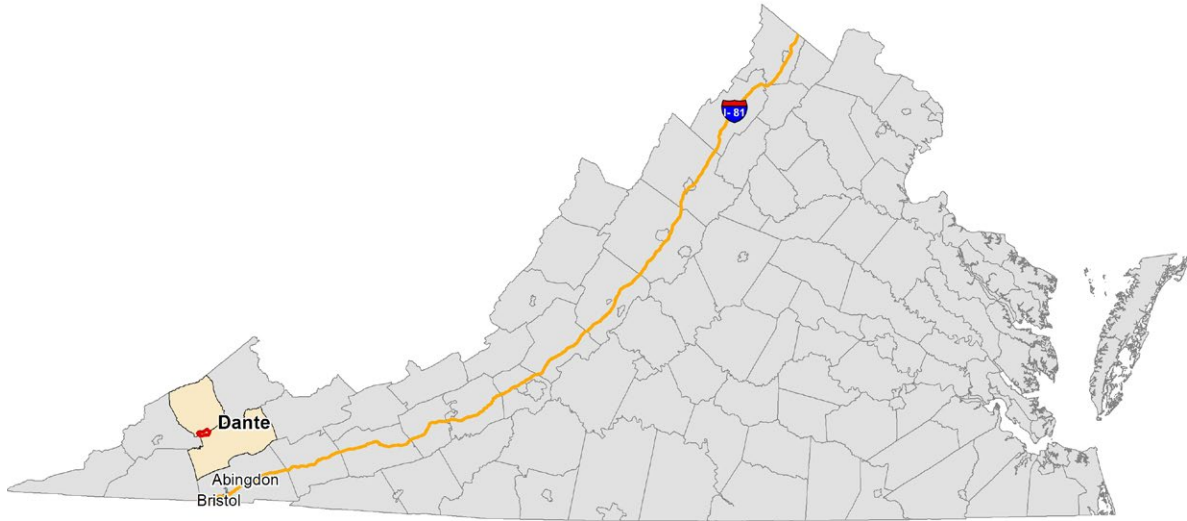


Students visited the Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum (above), home of an impressive permanent scale model (below) of Dante during the 1940s.



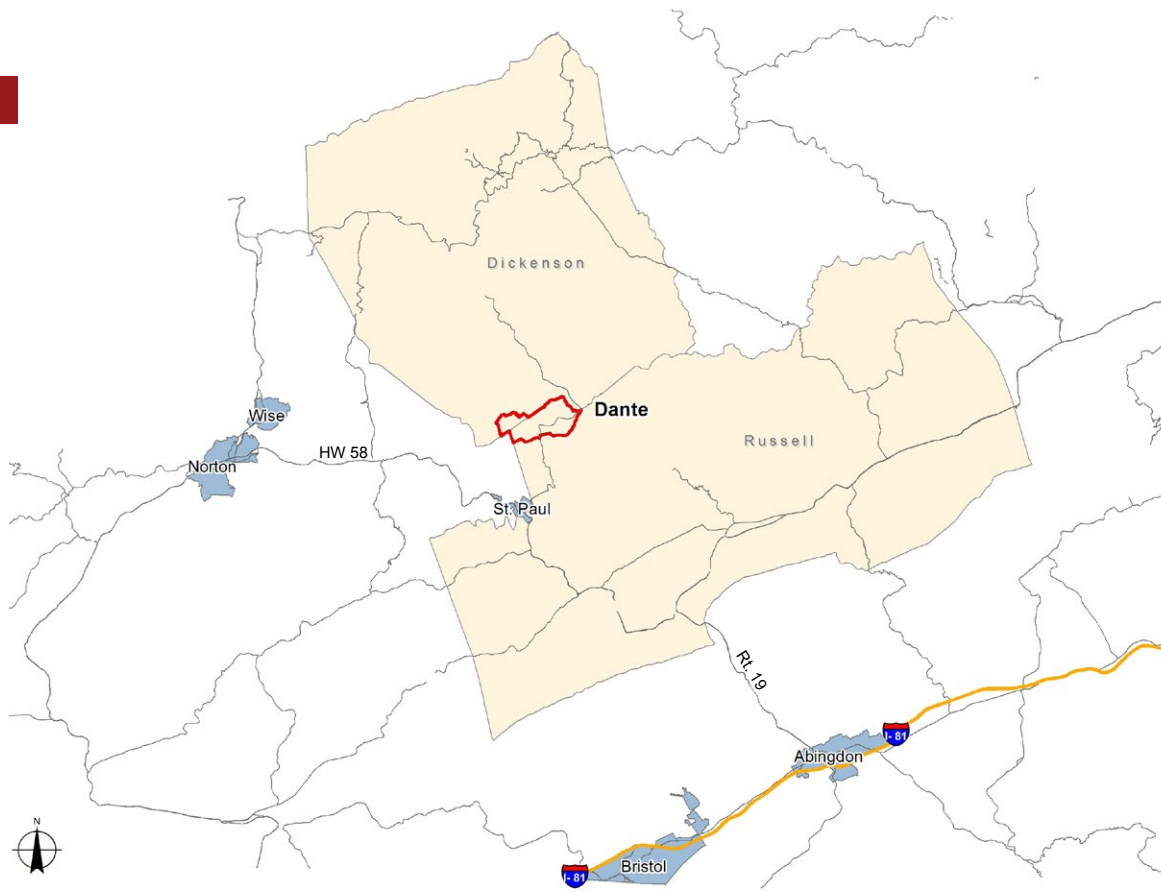
1. Wikipedia. 2016. Dante, Virginia, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dante,_Virginia
2. Shearer, K. 2001. from Memories From Dante: The Life of a Coal Town

PROJECT LOCATION

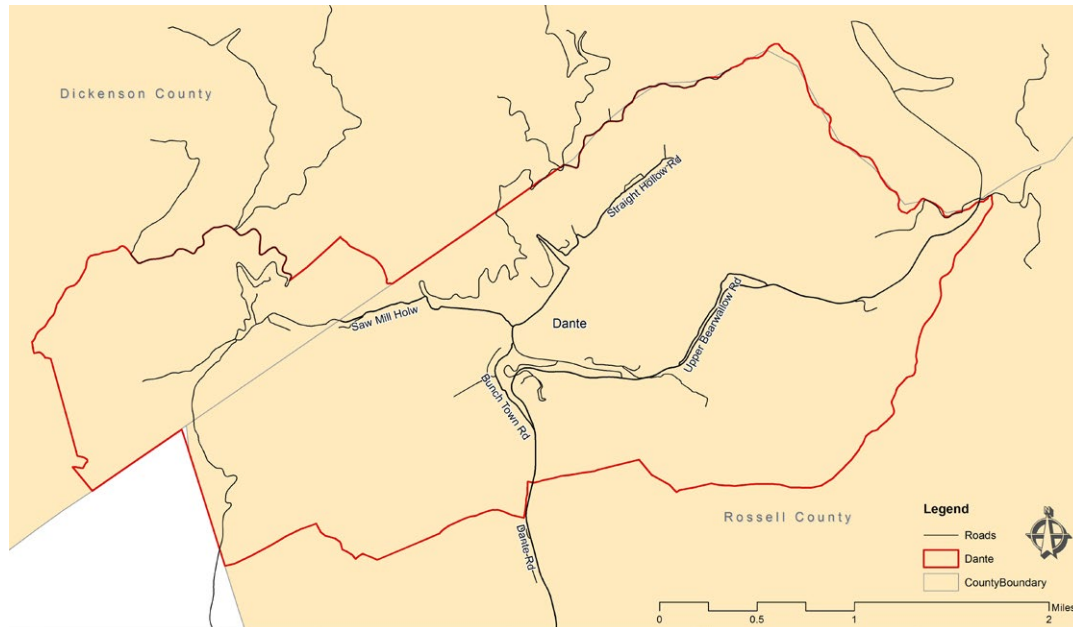


Dante, VA, located in Russell County in southwest Virginia (above), is approximately ten minutes north of St. Paul, VA, fifty minutes west of Abingdon, VA, and forty minutes east of Norton and Wise, VA (below).

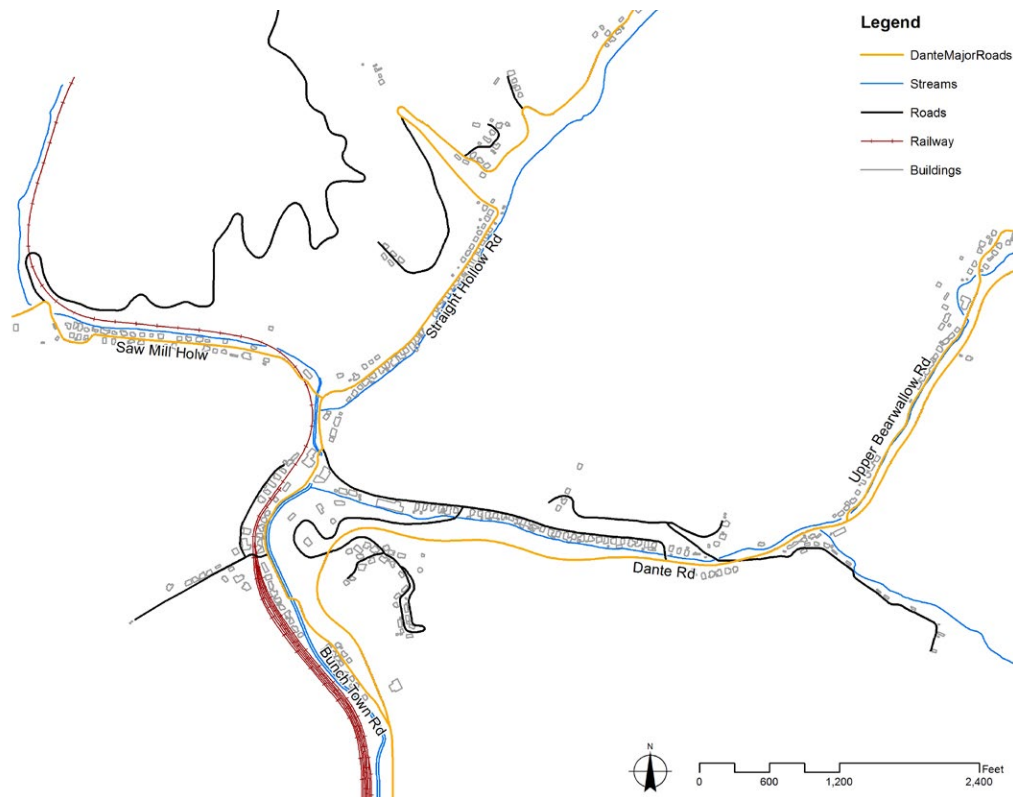
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PROJECT LOCATION



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



PROJECT LOCATION



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The charrette process focused on the downtown region depicted above.

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

SITE VISIT

The undergraduate students and faculty from the Landscape Architecture Program travelled to Dante, Virginia on Wednesday, January 18th for a full-day of fact-finding and exploration of the town, its open spaces, and community cultural values. Vertical student teams (composed of students from 2nd through 5th year) worked through Wednesday, January 25th to identify potential opportunities for community revitalization and redevelopment ranging from large scale recreational and tourism ties to the county, to community open space master planning, and to smaller site specific improvements. The following pages contain the design concepts each team created along with a brief description.



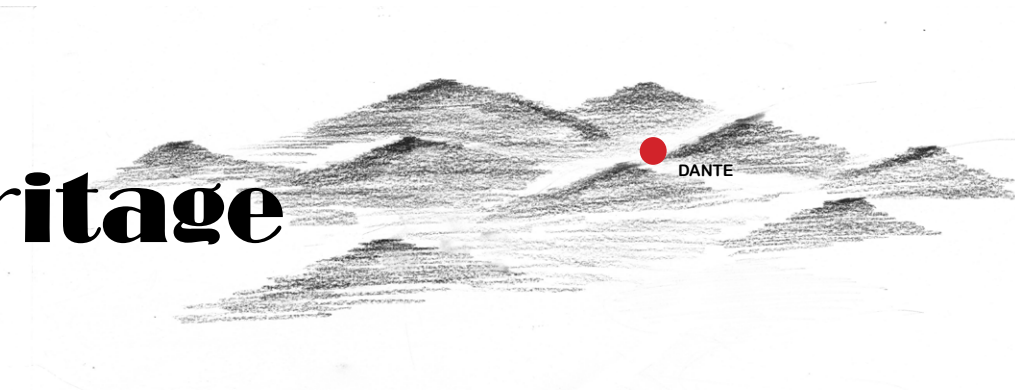
Students met over lunch with community members before heading out for team tours throughout the community.



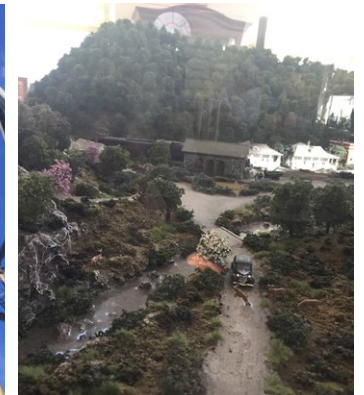
Dante community members Josh Sawyers and Jason Guallet (left) showed students their famous 2-mile railroad tunnel (rail line now decommissioned). Rail transportation played a vital role in the town's once booming coal industry.

The Resurgence of Dante Heritage

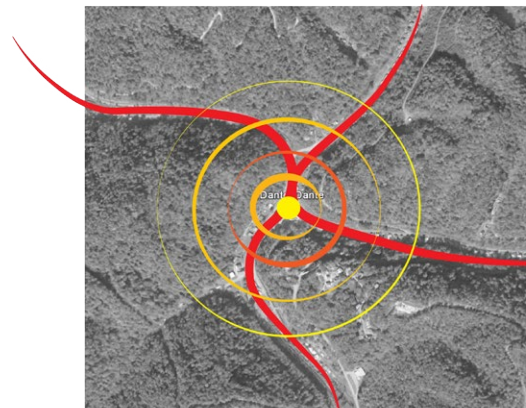
Danielle Sherman, Alexander Jones, Zichen Liu, Patrick Manijayme



View Tower



Overlook of Old Town



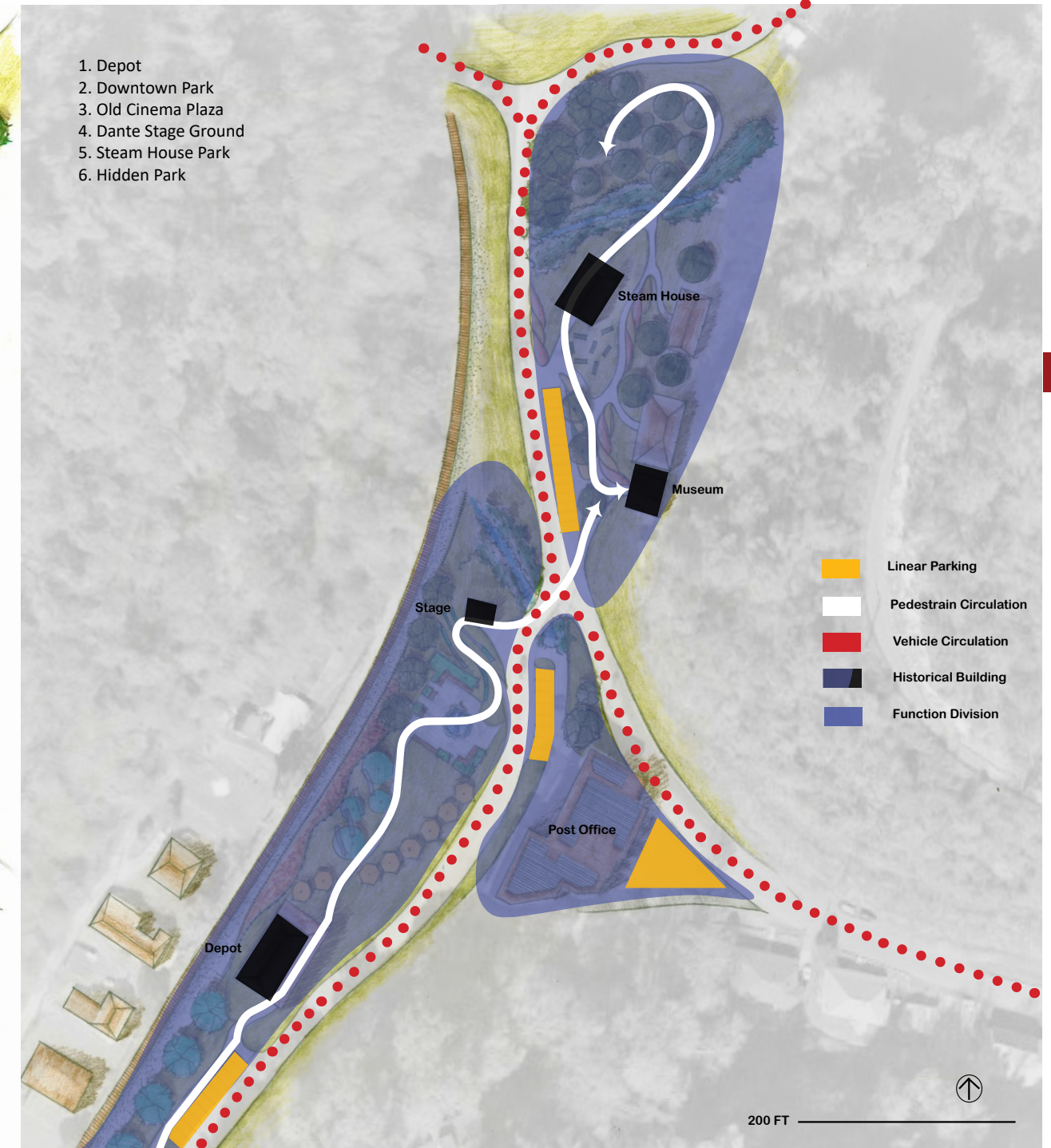
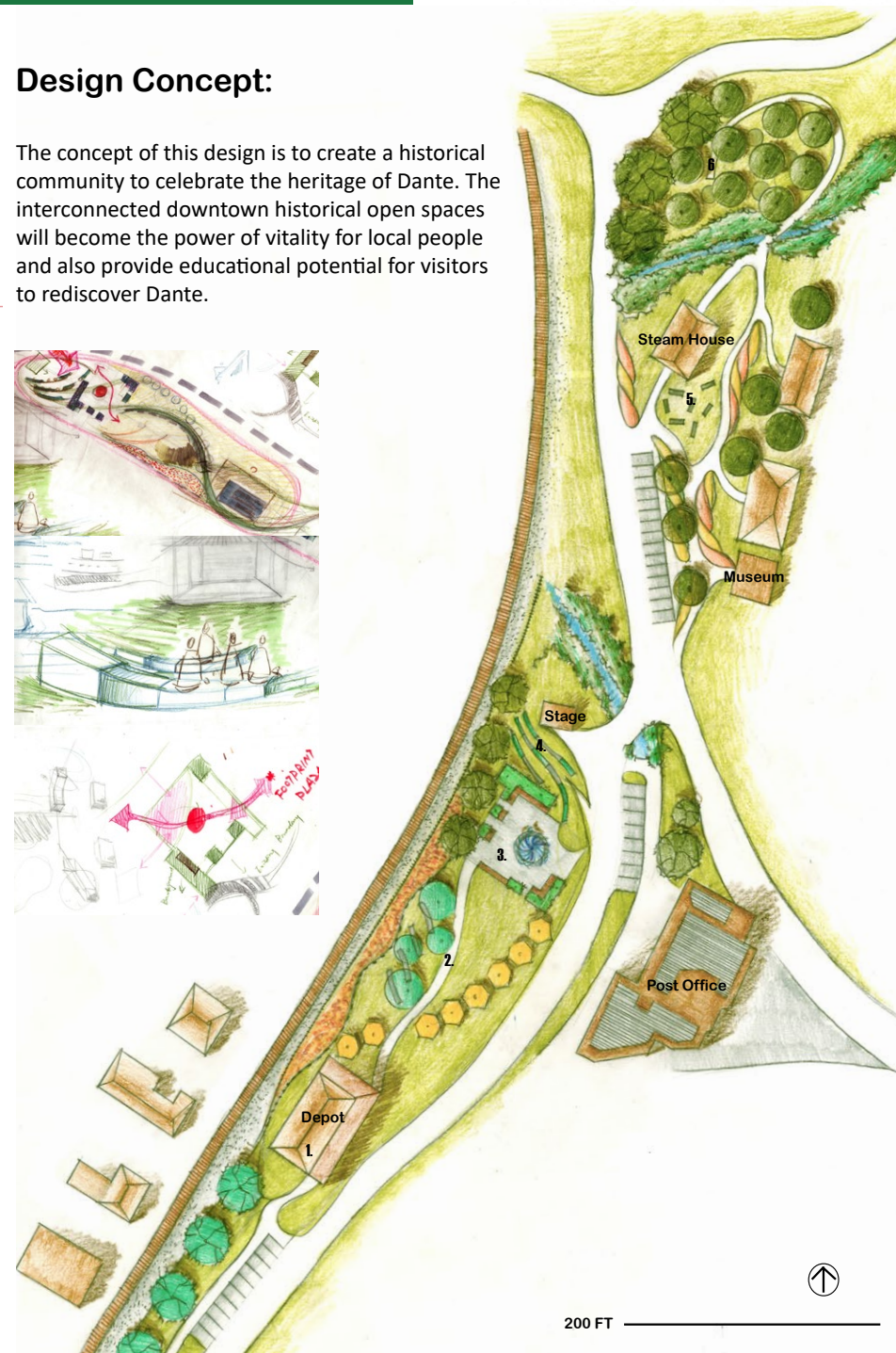
Design Concept:

The concept of this design is to create a historical community to celebrate the heritage of Dante. The interconnected downtown historical open spaces will become the power of vitality for local people and also provide educational potential for visitors to rediscover Dante.



Background of Dante, VA:

Dante was established in the late 1700's to early 1800's by western frontiersmen. The town's growth and development boomed in the early 1900's when several coal seams were discovered. 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 (mainly Bear Wallow and Straight Hollow) during the early part of the 20th century. As a result, immigrants from Germany, Hungary, Greece, Poland and other central European countries flocked to the area.



1. Depot
2. Downtown Park
3. Old Cinema Plaza
4. Dante Stage Ground
5. Steam House Park
6. Hidden Park

- Linear Parking
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Vehicle Circulation
- Historical Building
- Function Division

The Resurgence of Dante Heritage



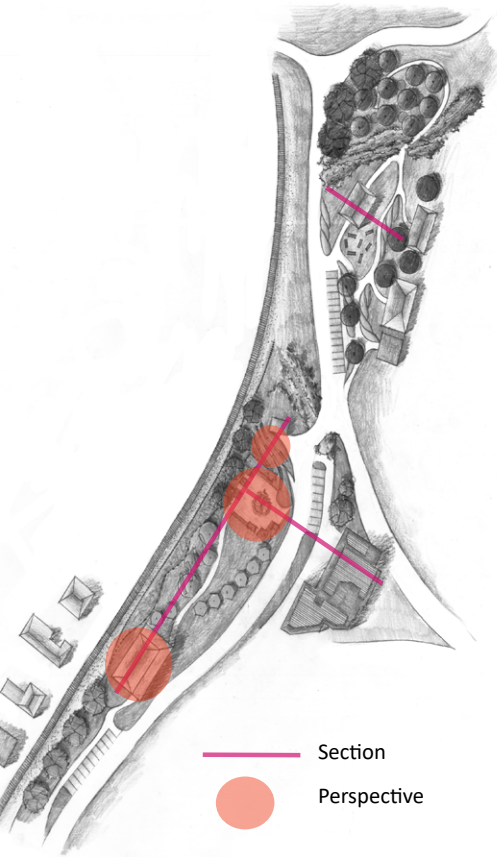
Section elevation of Plaza with relationship to the Post Office



Section elevation of Downtown Park



Section elevation of Steam House Park



Dante Stage Grounds:
The Dante Stage provides tourism and possible celebration to invite and hold from concerts to local plays.



Dante Stage Before



Dante Stage After

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Old Cinema Plaza:
The footprint of the old movie theater has been kept for the heritage and revitalized to accommodate a central gathering community space. The central fountain anchors the history of the movie theater to give it life, while also giving the town of Dante a place to celebrate.



Theater Footprint Before



Theater Footprint After

Depot:
Redesigned to hold service events providing cultural food kitchens to serve to tourists and locals of Dante, while neighboring the Downtown Park Space.



Depot Before



Depot After

LINKAGE

TO CREATE CONTINUITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF DANTE AMONG THE DISPARATE ELEMENTS AND HOLLOWS, AND TO CREATE CONTINUITY REGIONALLY, EXPLORING HOW DANTE IS A PART OF THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA REGION.



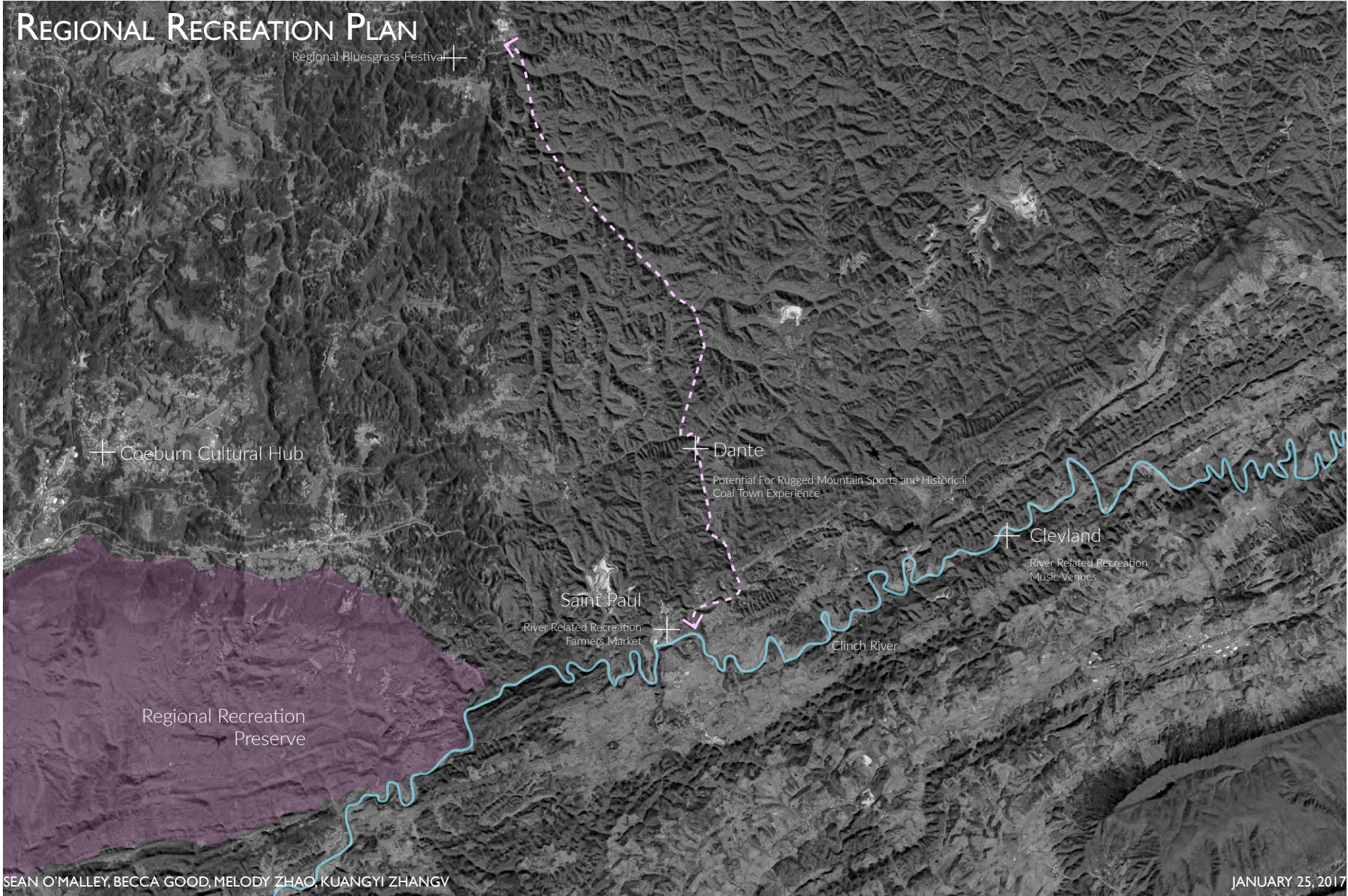
DANTE

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

- Discontinuity of significant elements of hollows
- Lack of awareness of history of Dante outside of residents
- Lack of pedestrian accessibility
- Little connection (physical or otherwise) to the region and surrounding towns
- No distinct reasons recreationally for visitors to choose to come to Dante or for families and individuals to choose to make Dante their home

OBJECTIVES:

- Explore at a regional scale what linkage can mean for the town of Dante in the SWVA region, and what possibilities exist for Dante to connect to the region.
- Propose ways to highlight historical or other landmark areas in Dante's various hollows and segments as spaces to be used by and to educate the community and visitors on Dante's history.
- Propose pedestrian-friendly streetscape in key areas of Dante to connect the hollows.
- Propose a recreational program for Dante with activities that can equip Dante as a part of a larger "recreational hub" of the region



ISSUE

At present there is a disconnection in Dante due to the lack of sidewalks linking each of the different hollows. Residents and visitors are forced to walk on the main roads to access the majority of the town which poses a question of safety.

After a significant amount of rain, the existing storm drains struggle to cope with controlling the levels of water and are prone to overflowing.

PROPOSED

Introduce new sidewalk system with links reconnecting the community and creating a more accessible and pedestrian friendly town.

Expand the existing drainage system and introduce water tolerant plants to help absorb the excess rainwater.



RECREATION AND LINKAGE PLAN

There are many pockets and hollows and segments of the town of Dante, all distinct in character and features, ranging from the Gateway point entering the town to the town's core to the historically African American hollow. Within these there are historical or other significant landmarks such as the Depot, the African American school and ball field, the steps of Roanoke Hill, the coal company president's house, a view toward Kentucky, and the fire tower at a county line. We propose that by highlighting or renewing the use of some of the historical or landmark sites, a continuous rhythm will be created from hollow to hollow, something that can be explored as a historical trail used by local schools and educational programs. Elements can be added as they are restored and repurposed over the course of the next few years or decades.



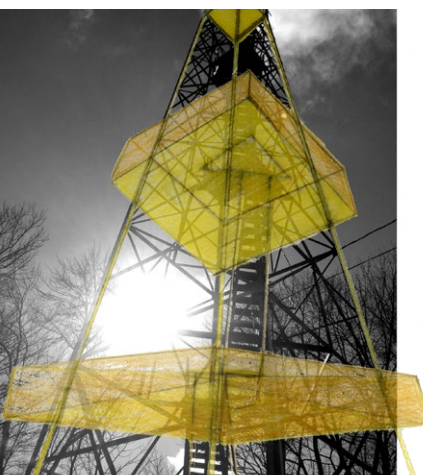
①



SCHOOL AS A RENEWED/HIGHLIGHTED LANDMARK

The African American school has great opportunity for becoming a community space (assuming funds are acquired for asbestos removal). The structure of the school can be used, opening up half of the school (streamside portion) into an outdoor planted courtyard and seating area, and the hillside portion can be restored for use of individual classrooms as studio or office or coworking space in the following years.

②



FIRE TOWER AS A RENEWED/HIGHLIGHTED LANDMARK

The fire tower is located just past the junction of the road with an overlook into Kentucky, and the tower itself is located as a point representing the county line between Dickenson and Russell Counties. A suggestion was made for a visitor's center to be located at the fire tower site, and one step in that direction is to create one or two accessible platforms for a lookout as an addition to the fire tower, something done in other areas of Virginia such as the High Knob Fire Tower Lookout.

③



HISTORIC ROANOKE HILL STEPS AS A RENEWED/HIGHLIGHTED LANDMARK

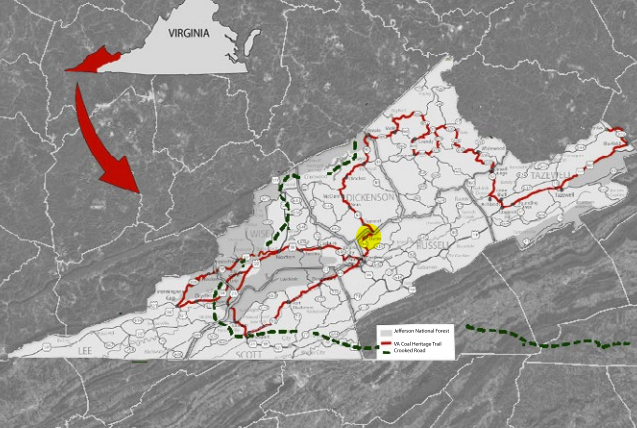
The brick steps of Roanoke Hill can be restored and maintained as the start of a walking path trailhead for the use of Roanoke Hill once again as a lookout point for community and visitors to overlook the core of the town. It can be a point within the system of landmarks for visitors to learn about the history of the coal company and the location of the company president's house.

THE REBIRTH OF DANTE: A SEED OF HOPE IN SOILS RICH WITH HISTORY...

- **Dante Virginia** is situated along the already existing Coal Heritage trail, making it a prime opportunity to make it a desirable destination along the way.
- It is also situated not too far away from the **Crooked Road**, a bluegrass music trail, making another good opportunity to bring people in and participate in the music culture.
- Significant research has been done by Appalachian Wildlife foundation exploring the idea of reforestation & remediating areas affected by surface mining with orchards and vineyards.



REGIONAL CONTEXT



- Successful (both economically & ecologically) peach, pear & apple orchards have helped to reclaim and repurpose soils on mine spoils on Eastern Interior Coal Province sites.



PRINCIPLES

- INCREASE REGIONAL PRESENCE & CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM
- IMPROVE HEALTH & LIFESTYLE OF RESIDENTS W/ OUTDOOR ENGAGEMENT
- MAINTAIN HERITAGE & CELEBRATE HISTORY OF DANTE

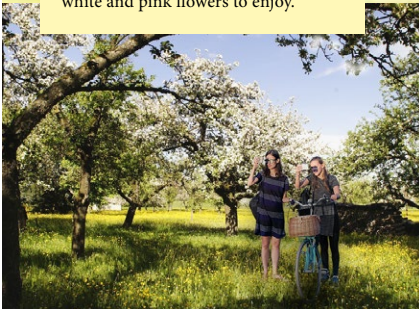
SUMMER

Outdoor festivals, local farmer market gatherings, and sharing of music could occur within the shade of the orchards while creating economic opportunities.



SPRING

While waiting for next year's apples, these orchards that dot most of Dante would give way for a whole scenery of white and pink flowers to enjoy.



WINTER

After collecting the season's produce, opportunities to creatively use the apples abound, such as canning, making jams and butters, etc., as a community effort.



FALL

Being the perfect season for apple picking, this could form future traditions for community-building as well as family gatherings friendly to all ages.



- Dante is a town that came to be due to the abundant presence of coal and built its foundation based upon this resource. Much like an apple tree, Dante grew from a small seedling into an abundant and productive tree, giving life and vitality to Dante.

Megumi Kamiya

WHAT STEPS ARE NEEDED TO PLANT AN ORCHARD?



1

Create a suitable rooting medium for good tree growth that is no less than four feet deep and comprised of topsoil, weathered sandstone, and/or the best available material.



2

Loosely grade the topsoil or topsoil substitutes established in step one to create a non-compacted growth medium.

3

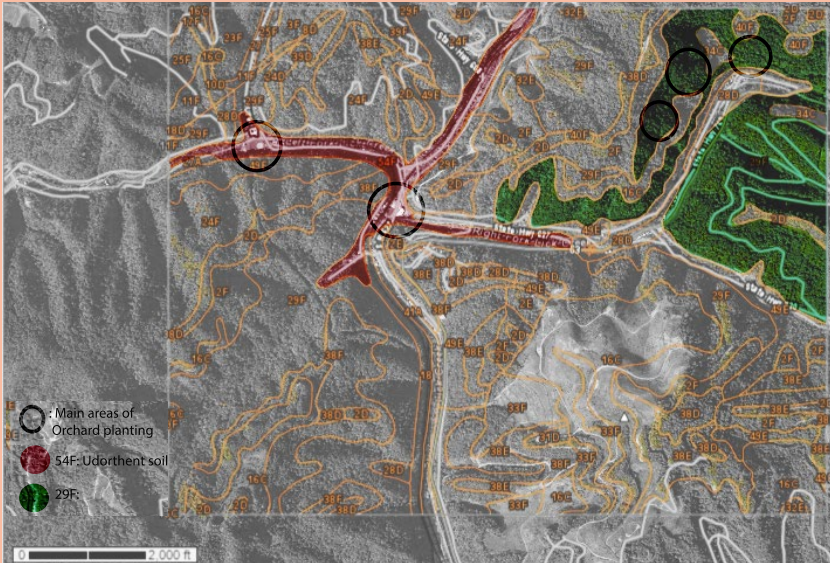
Use ground covers that are compatible with growing trees.

4

Plant two types of trees: (a) early succession species for wildlife and soil stability and (b) commercially valuable crop trees

5

Use proper tree planting techniques



Growing Conditions:

- Orchards prefer slightly acidic sandy loams or sandy clay soils that are well drained with a high presence of organic matter.
- Apple orchards on mountain sites can flourish due to long hours of good quality sunlight and good drainage on the slopes.

CAN THE SOIL SUPPORT ORCHARDS?



29F High-Splint Shelocta Complex: Well drained soil with more than 80 inches depth to water table. Complex is composed of decomposed plant material (top layer) & silt loam layers beneath.

54F Udorthents: Well drained soil with more than 80 inches depth to water table. Soil is loamy with moderate acidity. Ideal soil for recreation and urban spaces, however can be used for farming as long as there is not a heavy presence of metals.

Dante Orchards
Silent Memorials

Dante, Va
01/24/2017

Kayleigh McKenzie

Katie Thomas

Yanjie Yuan

Drawing No. 1

THE MANY ORCHARDS OF DANTE...

THE BASEBALL FIELD ORCHARD...

As one takes a bite into a crunchy, sweet apple, they may envision the crunch of a bat hitting the ball out of the park; a sweet, sweet victory.



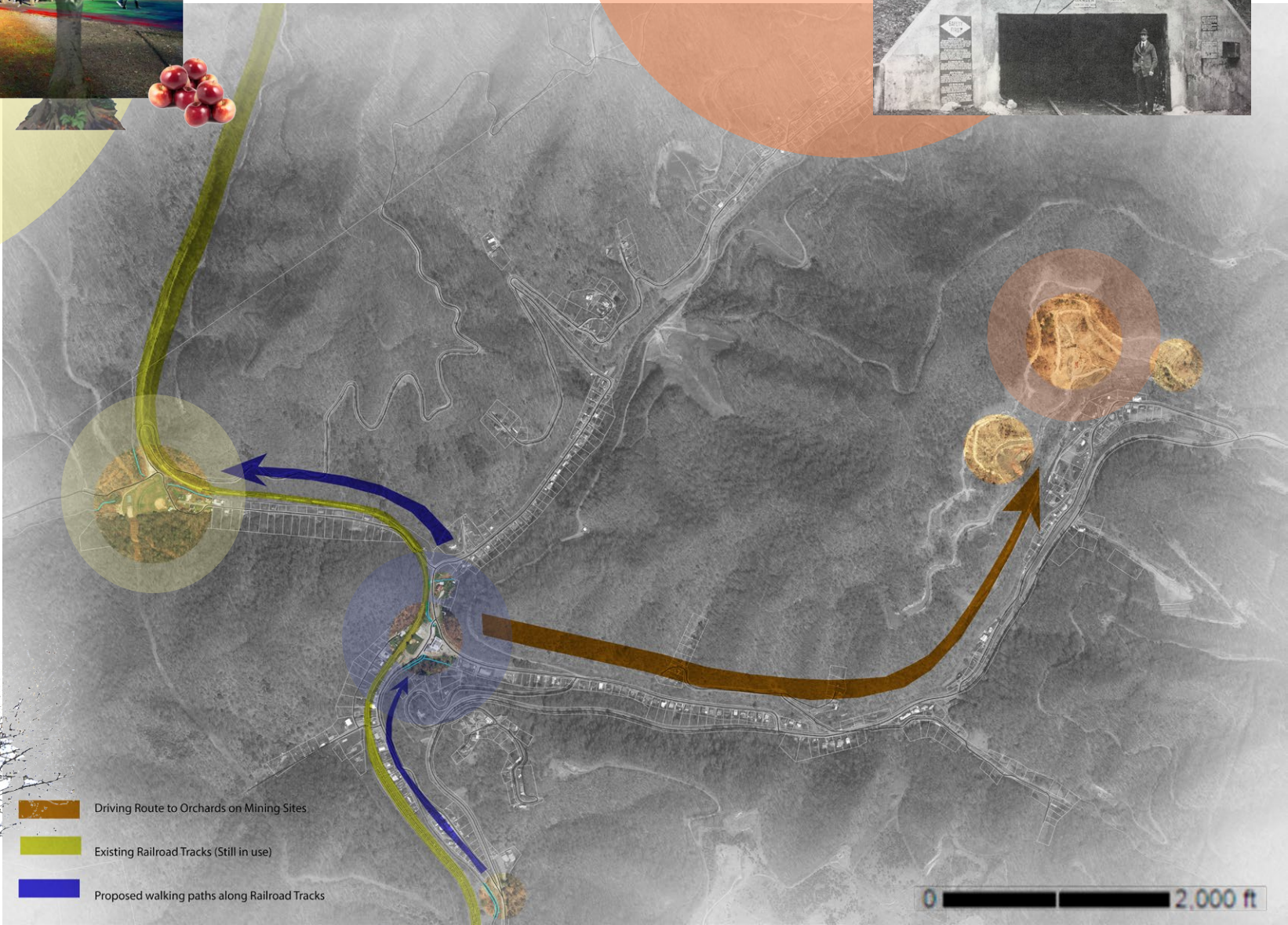
ORCHARD AT THE MINES...

Apple trees serve as silent memorials, growing from the same earth that once gave Dante it's rich coal industry and history.



DOWNTOWN ORCHARD

As a cool breeze wafts the smell of apple blossoms through downtown Dante, children are laughing and playing and one is reminded of a busy summers day in Dante many years ago...



Dante Orchards
Silent Memorials

Dante, Va
01/24/2017

Kayleigh McKenzie
Megumi Kamiya

Katie Thomas
Lauren Martin

Yanjie Yuan

Drawing No.
2

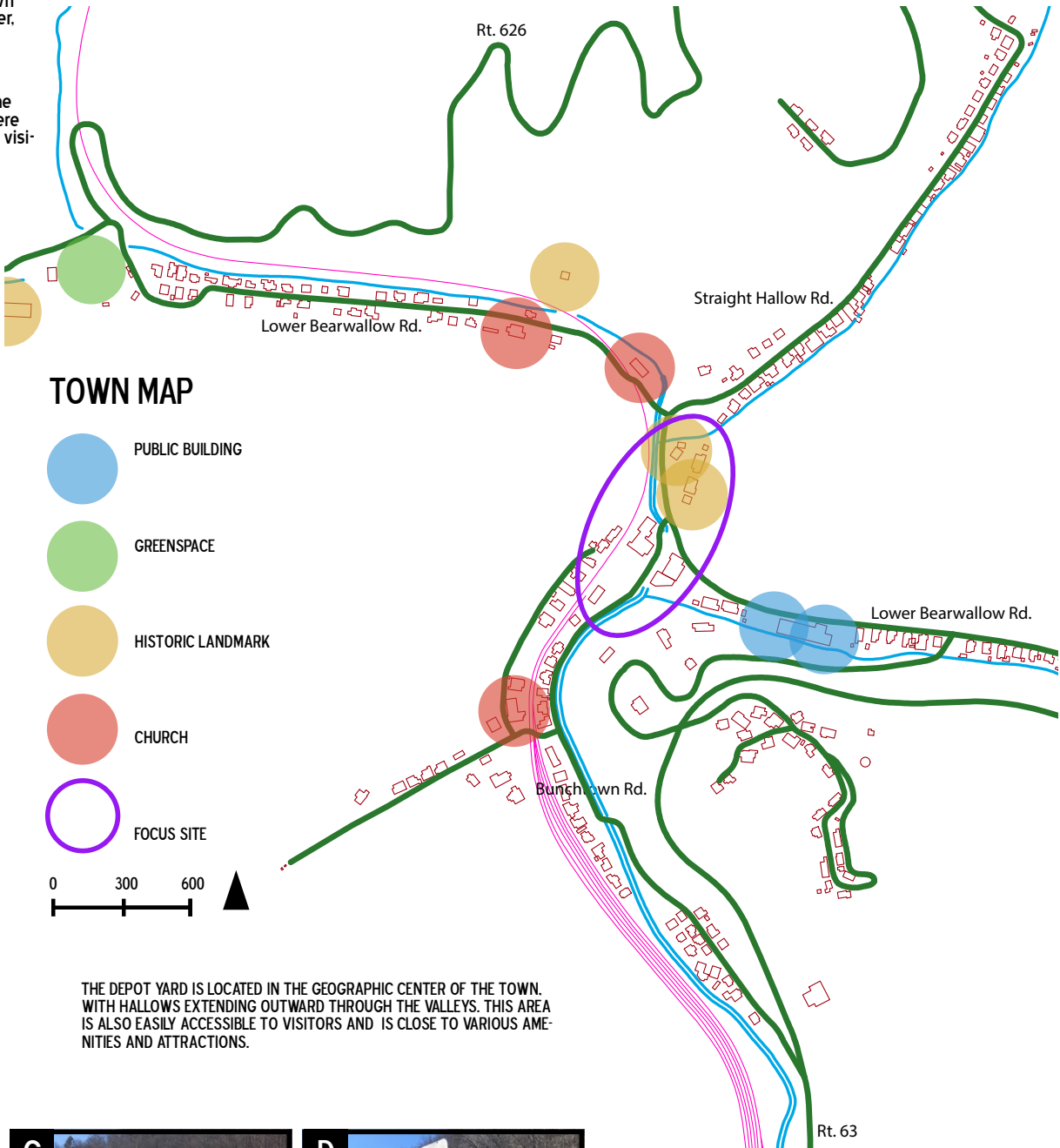
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION:
Dante, Virginia, is a place of family memories and small town living. The center of the community, although once a bustling place, lacks the habitual activity it once had. Dante needs a common place of passing in order to restore town connectedness. And with this reconnection, the community will grow closer, pass on their stories, and live long, healthy lives.

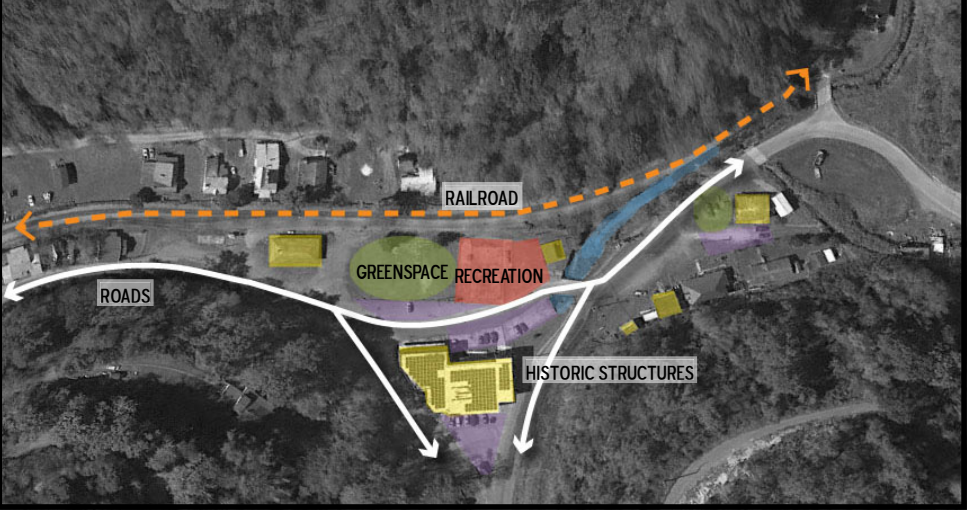
FOCUS:
Establish a community meeting place in the heart of Dante by restoring the Depot Yard, where town pride will be rekindled for future generations, where greenspace will improve the health and happiness of residents, and where visitors will experience the town's heritage. The town's front Yard.

- GOALS:**
- 1 Improve the community recreation and outdoor space at the Depot Yard by adding a walking loop around the existing lawn, delineating recreation space, constructing a shade structure adjacent to the basketball court, and establishing gardens and picnic areas.
- Pergola structure next to basketball court with porch swings
 - Asphalt walking loop around Depot Lawn, buffered from train tracks and parking lot by low fence and plantings.
 - Trees and garden space around the boundaries of the yard and structures; benches and tables throughout
 - Converted steam plant becomes a trail head for mine trails and visitors. In close proximity to the museum, it completes a tourist center.
 - Overhead lighting in the Depot Yard allows longer hours of use and increased safety
- 2 Provide flexible spaces for Dante traditions, regional events, and day-to-day activities for residents; these spaces include: a stage, a screen for projecting films, multi-use community room, lawn for large events, and rehabilitation of existing buildings.
- Stage extension off the Depot that overlooks the Depot Lawn; hosts bluegrass performances or local shows, and is used as an extension of the Community Room.
 - Pole and pulley system on north end of Depot Yard to raise a canvas screen during film events
 - Large lawn with removable barriers to allow vehicular access and space for festivals
 - Preservation of basketball court for recreation and other events
 - Informal parking between the Lawn and the Post Office building, also space for a future bus stop
- 3 Restore the Train Depot as the anchor of Dante by creating public restrooms, water fountain, welcome center, small concession store, and community room; implement improvements ensuring accessibility to all.
- Welcome plaza on Depot's south facade with wayfinding signage, town map, and seating
 - Restroom and water fountain for visitors, community room users, and recreation users
 - Small concession stand with kitchen space; could be used publicly, only during events, or eventually as a commercial establishment.
 - Community Room, located in the north section of the Train Depot, contains tables and chairs and has public internet capability. A ramp leads up to the elevated floor.

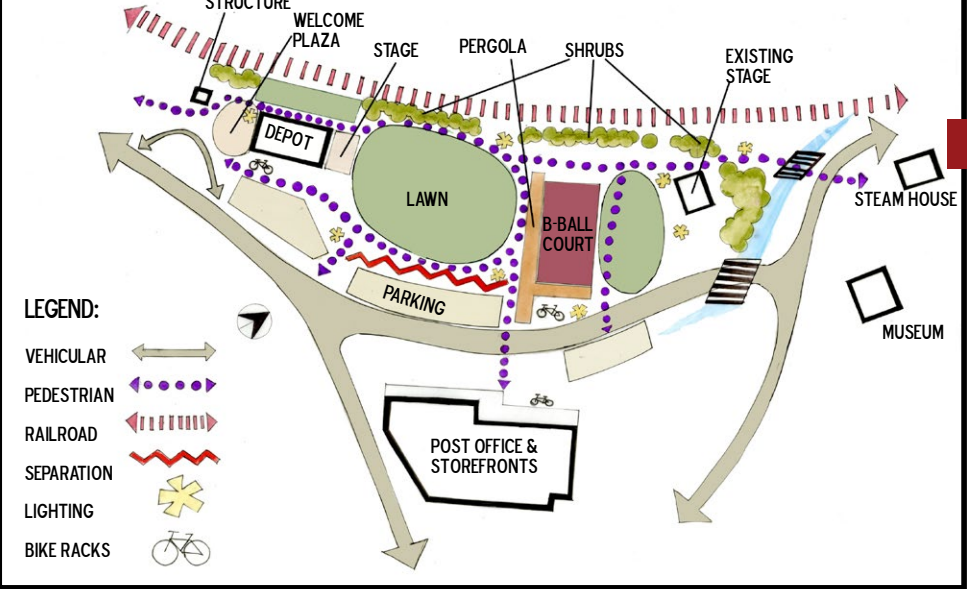
DANTE (N)
: A PLACE WHERE STORIES PREVAIL THROUGH GENERATIONS
: THE MELTING TOGETHER OF CULTURES, OF COAL
: HONEST COMMUNITY VALUES



ANALYSIS



CONCEPT

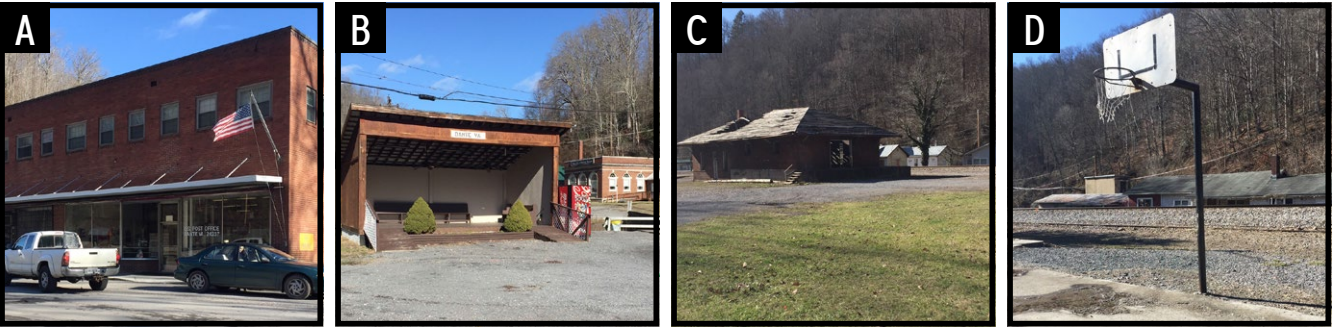


DESIGN CONCEPT FOR DANTE:
The Depot Yard in Dante, VA, has the potential to become an economic driver for the town; by both providing space for the community and attracting tourists. This central location acts as a town hub for activity - whether basketball, the daily mail, or weekend events. By increasing walkability and maintaining flexible use, the Depot Yard can host a variety of programs. Phase II, which includes the Steam House and Museum, incorporates an education and tourism center, connects to the central yard recreation space.
The future of the Depot Yard, however, must be both economically and functionally appropriate for the small town of Dante. Low maintenance landscapes and a component-based design allows for sequential development. The proximity of the active railroad and roads should be managed cautiously.

DANTE TODAY:

- A - POST OFFICE BUILDING**
Currently, the building holds the town post office and apartments; however, empty storefront could house a general store or deli. A bike rack, placed out front with some seating spaces for tired bikers, invites visitors inside to rest and grab a snack from their trip!
- B - STAGE**
The Stage currently holds small concerts. In the future, the structure can host local and regional events; further expanding into the open space that surrounds it. Dante's link to the Crooked Road and the Coal Heritage Trail makes the town a prime location for festivals and events.

- C - TRAIN DEPOT**
The Depot, after restoration, has the potential to become a community gathering point. As an anchor to the lawn, it could provide opportunities for public programming. In addition, a renovated space could act as a technology center for residents telecommuting.
- D - BASKETBALL COURT**
The Basketball Court is a space loved by the children of Dante, and despite its unique form, is heavily utilized. The foundations that compose the base of the court continue to memorialize Dante's vibrant age.



DANTE, VIRGINIA - DEPOT YARD

VIRGINIA TECH DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
STUDIO CHARRETTE, JANUARY 2017
JILL MILLER, AMELIA HULSHULT, BLAKE ROBERTS, LYDIA VACCARE, & JESSY QIU

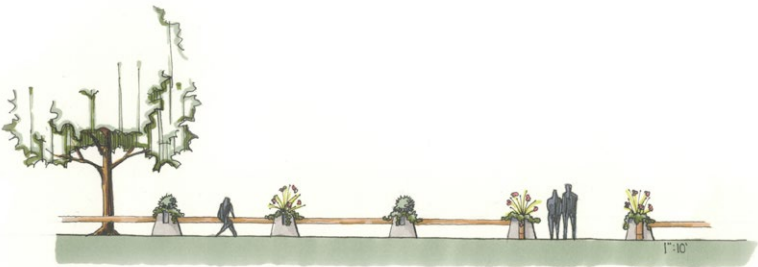
DOWN TO THE DEPOT

THE DEPOT YARD STRIVES NOT TO CHANGE DANTE. NOR DWELL IN THE PAST. INSTEAD, THE DEPOT YARD RETELLS THE STORY OF THE TOWN AS ONE THAT CONTINUES - ONE THAT STRENGTHENS WITH TIME - AND ONE THAT FOCUSES ON THE PRIDE OF A SMALL COAL TOWN.

AS THE FRONT YARD OF THE COMMUNITY, THE SPACE CATERS TO DAY-TO-DAY HABITS, THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS, AND THE TOWN'S HERITAGE. VISITORS TO THE REGION WILL FIND DANTE ON THE MAP NOT AS A RE-CREATION OF A COAL TOWN, BUT TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY WHO STILL REMEMBERS THEIR COAL PAST.

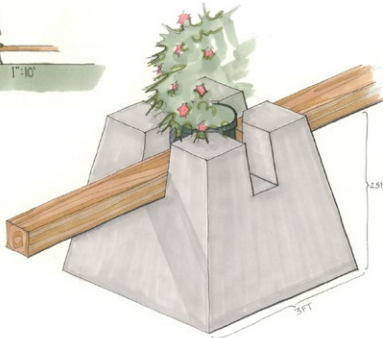
WALKING LOOP AND LAWN

A continuous walking loop surrounds the lawn between the Depot and the pergolas. The lawn provides a recreation space for families, children, and their pets. It could host organized games and trees around the loop provide shade for those watching the activities. Fairs and festivals occupy the lawn: access to the space is easily made by opening the bollard wall. The main loop also connects to the road and circulates around the town center. Bicycle racks invite residents to cycle to the center, promoting physical activity and sustainable habits.



BOLLARDS:

These structures, composed of concrete and wood, create separation between the roadway, parking, and lawn. The wood slats, which act as benches, can be removed and rearranged in alternate configurations. Colorful annual plantings fill the bollards and can be maintained by citizens. They also can function as seating and delineate parking spaces.

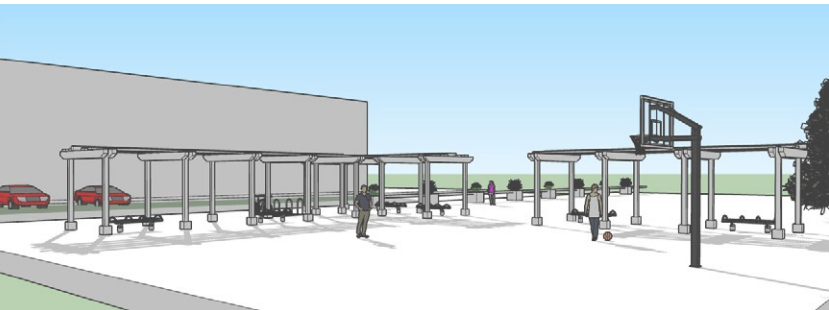


PHASE II

View from street looking up through Phase II (Culture & Education Area) to the stone Steam House. The Museum and Steam House serve as focal points, and act as a trailhead for future recreation trails.

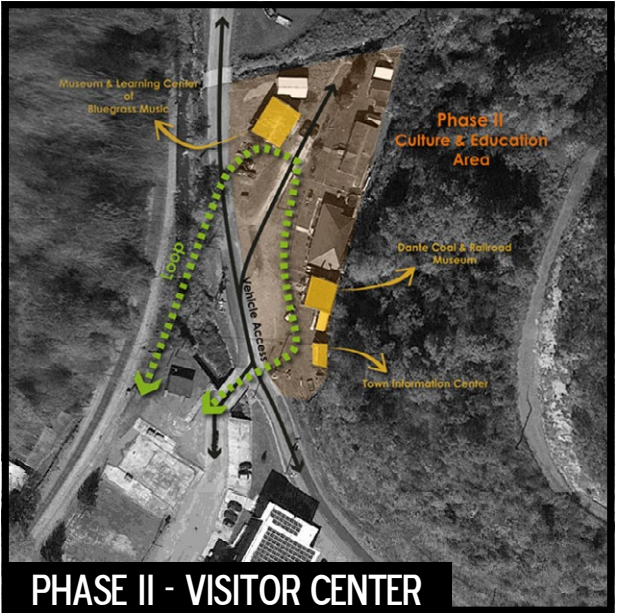
YARD SECTION: (Above)

Section spans from the railroad tracks to the existing Post Office. The spacious lawn hosts picnicking, dog walking, jogging, and other leisurely activities.



BASKETBALL COURT & PERGOLA: (Below)

A wooden pergola provides shade and swing seating for basketball players, spectators, and visitors. The court, utilizing the foundation of the old theatre, continues to provide entertainment for local children.



RESTORED DEPOT:

The Depot represents the great history of Dante, Virginia, and is the first structure seen when entering the Yard. By converting the Depot to a community center - with a kitchen, restrooms, event space, and an internet hookup - it becomes the functional heart of the town again!

Public restrooms, located in the south side of the Depot connect to the welcome plaza where guests find a town map, brochures, and a place to relax. The middle section of the building contains a kitchen space that initially would be public, but could later become a private store or deli. A ramp allows for ADA access to the upper community room.

An extension of a deck on the north face serves as a stage, an outdoor gathering space, or eating area. During warm seasons, concert-goers spread across the lawn, on chairs and blankets.

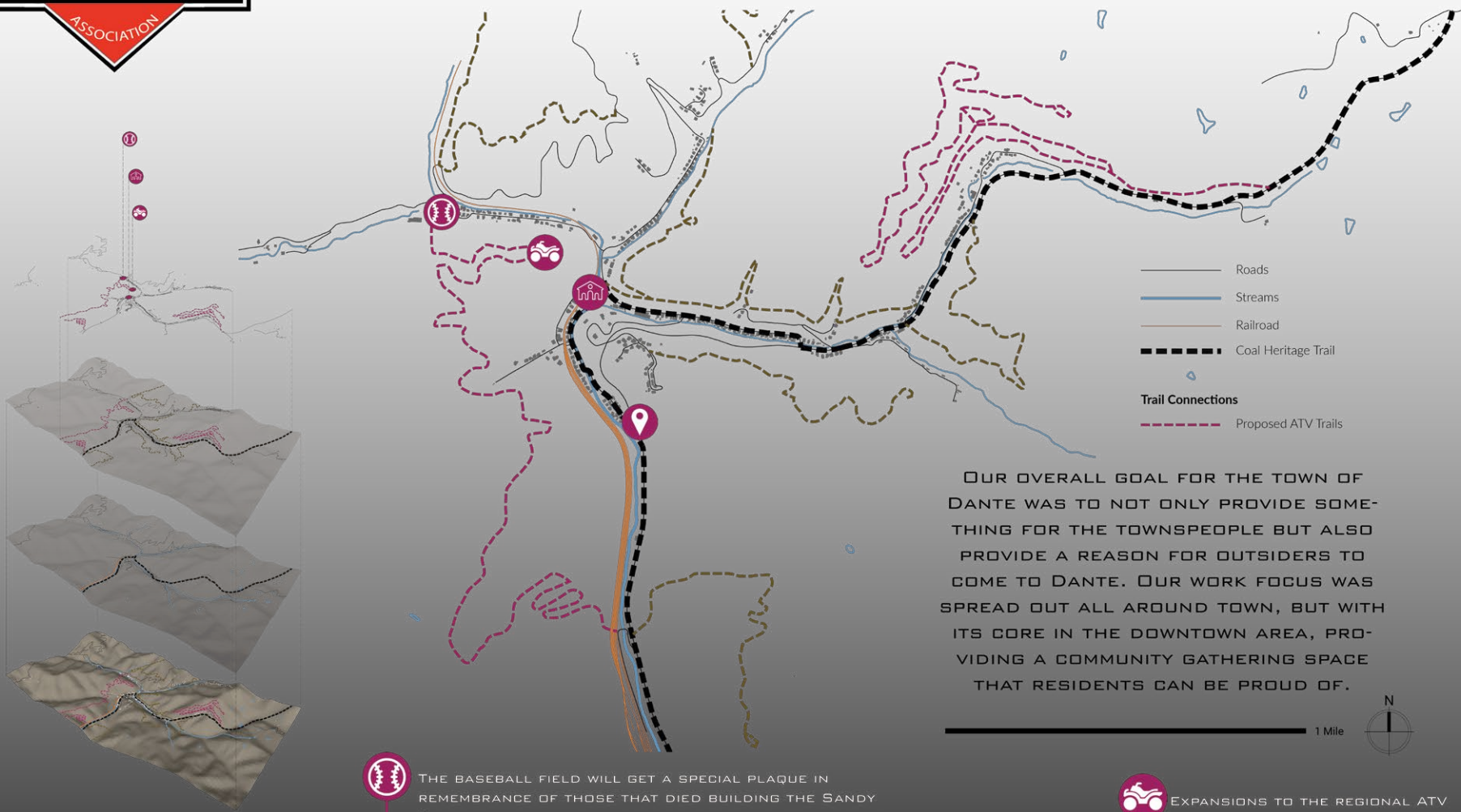
Gardens surrounding the Depot are maintained by the community. Picnic tables and benches could be made locally by citizens.





DAYLIGHTING DANTE

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION DESIGN



THE TOWN OF DANTE HAS A VAST AND RICH HISTORY OF CULTURES AND INDUSTRY, BUT THERE IS NO WAY TO EXPRESS THAT TO THE UNINITIATED. THE PROPOSED SIGNAGE PLAN CALLS FOR A LARGE ENTRANCE SIGN TO WELCOME RESIDENTS AND VISITORS INTO TOWN BUT ALSO A SYSTEM OF MARKERS PLACED ALL AROUND TOWN TO DENOTE THE MANY PLACES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

THE BASEBALL FIELD WILL GET A SPECIAL PLAQUE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE THAT DIED BUILDING THE SANDY RIDGE TUNNEL AS WELL AS EXPRESS THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE DANTE BALL TEAM WAS TO THE COMMUNITY.

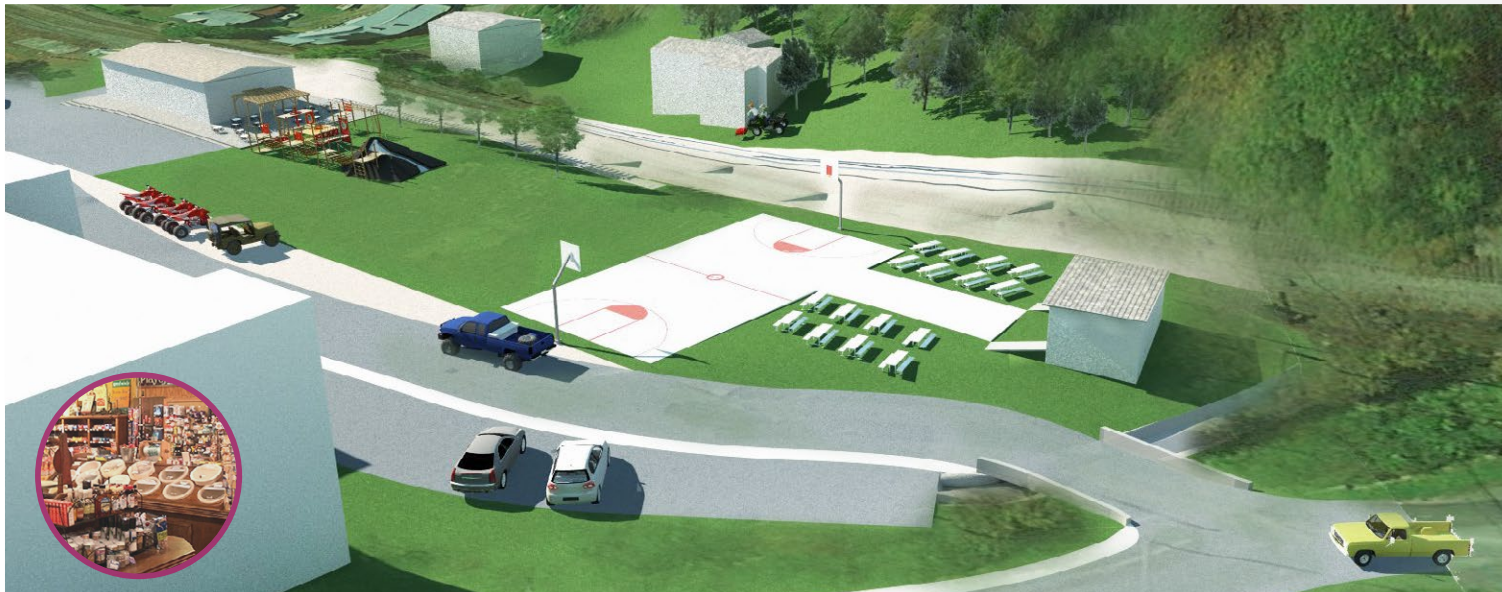
THE DEPOT AREA IS ONE OF THE MOST LACKING AREAS IN TOWN. WHAT USED TO BE A BUSTLING TOWN CENTER FOR 6,000, NOW ONLY HOLDS A POST OFFICE. THE OVERALL PLAN IS TO MAKE THE TOWN CENTER INTO A PLACE FOR DAILY USE AS WELL AS FESTIVALS. THE PLAYGROUND GRANT WOULD BE PUT TO USE HERE AND THE BASKETBALL COURT WOULD BE REFURBISHED TO PROVIDE A DOWNTOWN HUB FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS WHILE THE EXISTING STAGE AREA WILL BE SET UP TO ACCOMMODATE TOWN GATHERINGS AND MUSIC FESTIVALS, WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY START BRINGING OUTSIDERS IN FOR A FUN NIGHT OF GOOD LOCAL MUSIC AND GOOD LOCAL FOOD.

EXPANSIONS TO THE REGIONAL ATV TRAIL SYSTEM TO PROVIDE TRAIL HEADS IN DANTE WILL PROVIDE A WAY TO BRING OUTSIDERS INTO DANTE AS PART OF THEIR TRIP. THE EVENTUAL CREATION OF A TOWN STORE IN THE CURRENTLY ABANDONED DEPOT WILL MAKE DANTE INTO A WORTHWHILE STOP ALONG THE ATV TRAILS, AND HELP BRING MONEY AND ATTENTION TO DANTE AND ITS CULTURE AND HISTORY.

COLIN HARLAN • DANIEL FAWBUSH • LAUREN DELBRIDGE • MICHAEL STELFOX



TOWN CENTER



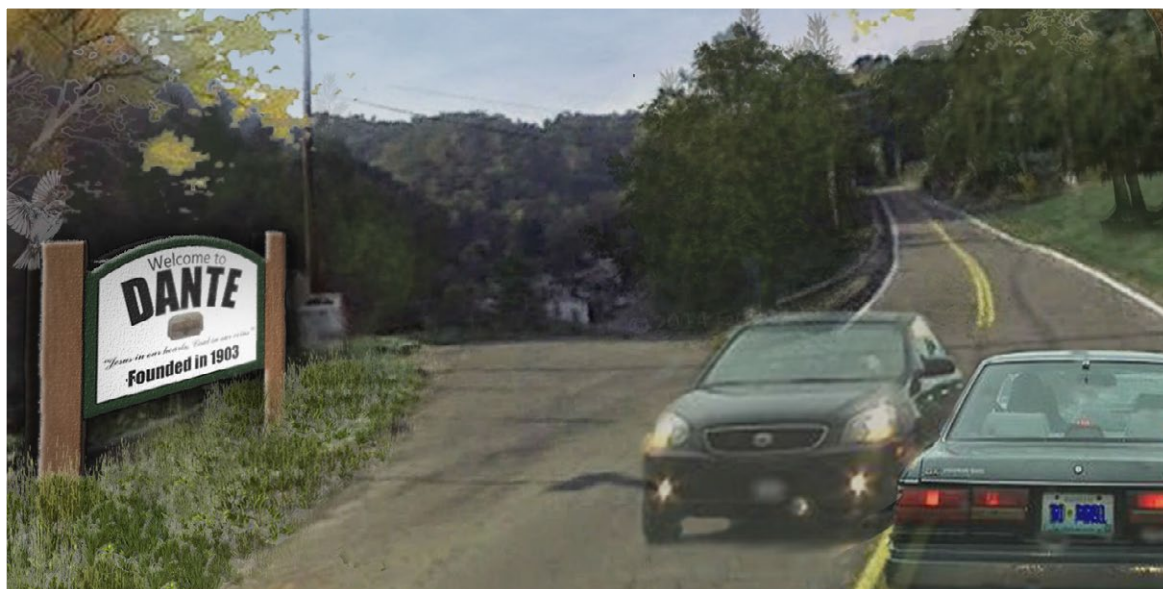
- Build Playground and refurbish existing Basketball Court
- Promote Stage for concerts and community gatherings
- Provide picnic tables for gathering and event space downtown
- Restore Depot to General Store (as is shown above) to relate to current Museum with former mining equipment and rail cars on siding next to Depot



SIGNS & PLAQUES

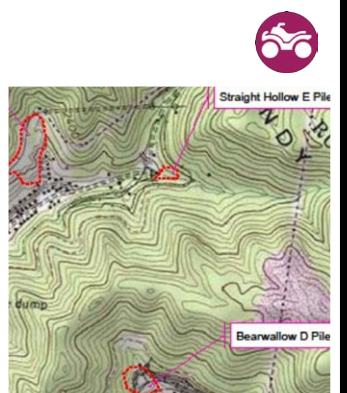
Potential Sign/Memorial plaque locations

- Coal Tipples
- Stairway to Heaven
- Steam Building
- Executive Houses
- Dante Hotel
- Dante Movie Theatre
- Mine Entrances
- Baseball Field



ATV TRAIL SYSTEM

- Add Trailheads in Dante to promote tourism and commerce in town
- Trail foundations built from trailings and gob piles by community or Gobco
- Future system of hiking, biking and horseback trails to expand tourism
- Waypoints at nature overlooks and historical locations



THE TOWN OF DANTE

PROBLEMS;

- Disconnected Hollows
- Lack of pedestrian friendly outdoor spaces
- Stormwater Management issues
- Disconnect from nearby towns like St. Paul
- Dilapidated buildings and neglected infrastructure

VISION:

- Revitalization and beautification of the downtown area in a cost efficient manner
- Promoting and facilitating the growth revenue generating infrastructure through design
- Preservation of small town values
- Increased linkage of the hollows and connections to the town of St. Paul and other nearby towns
- A reconceptualized entryway to the town
- Repurposing dilapidated buildings to both enhance downtown aesthetic and contribute as functional assets to the community
- Take advantage of natural topography and views to enhance the value of the town



- Nestled tightly between the town's arterial roads and iconic railways, redevelopment of the downtown district as a pedestrian friendly area and the implementation of well designed outdoor spaces will aid in the beautification and enhance the sense of community.
- Lick creek and its tributaries weave through the various hollows of Dante. Because their paths follow the general topography, and because the downtown area resides in a flat section of a valley, these areas are flood prone.

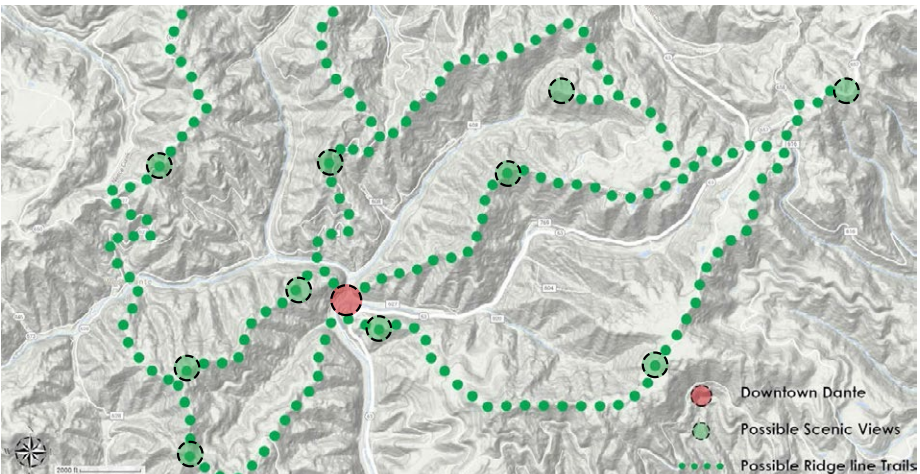
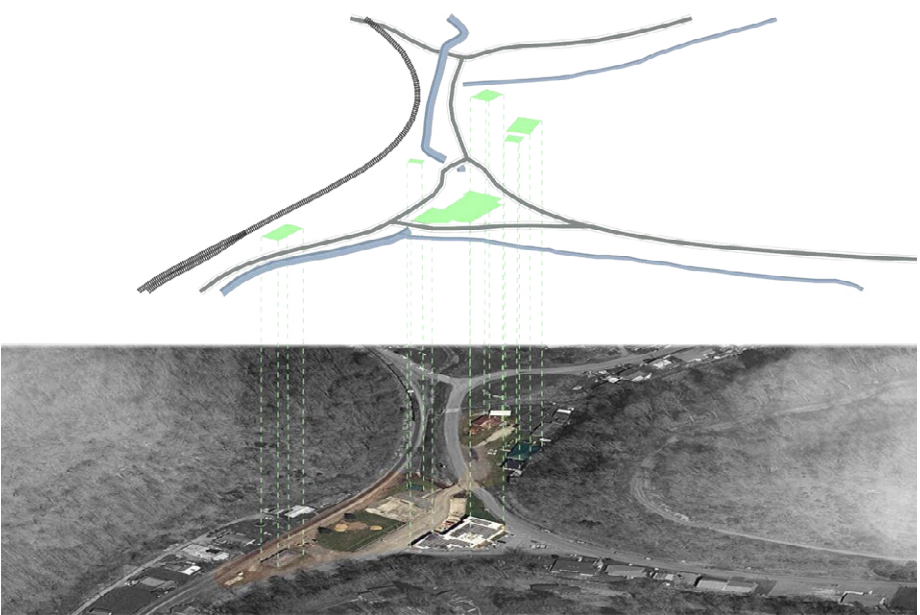


POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

- Existing infrastructure
- Creek
- Spatial restrictions due to the railway and road
- Budget and manpower issues

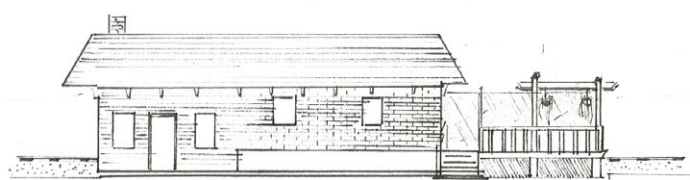
FOCUS AREAS

- Replanting of chocked out grass areas and addition of green space where possible
- Reduction and or optimization of unused impervious surface, such as portions of the neglected asphalt parking lot
- Maintenance of the building pad currently being used as the basketball court, and repaving its surface to function as a multi functional gathering space capable of hosting events, as well as continuing to serve as a recreational space for youth activities
- Repurposement of the depot as a mixed use restaurant or store with an adjoined outdoor deck space overlooking the revitalized park

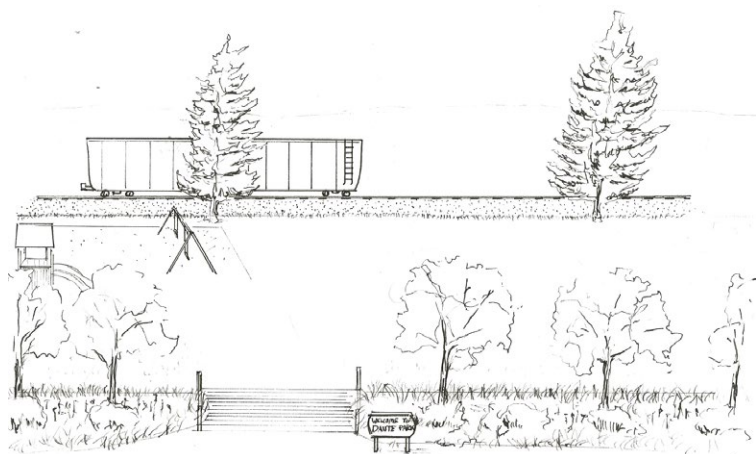


By taking advantage of preexisting trails that are cultural remnants of historic Dante, there is plenty of opportunity for recreational use, such as hiking, ATV riding, horseback riding, and with the addition of further trails it is possible to link downtown Dante with the surrounding landscapes and neighboring towns. Taking advantage of the natural views that the various ridges provide will provide a scenic vista that is unique to the region.

DESIGN STRATEGIES



The Depot can potentially be repurposed and remodeled as a new food attraction with outdoor deck space extending into the park. A food or icecream truck would be a beneficial supplement to this space, creating an additional incentive to make a trip from a separate hollow.



The addition of a playground to the central park will add an attraction to the central district of Dante, drawing children and supervising adults alike to the space. The greenspace not being utilized for playground surface can serve as a multifunctional space in conjunction with a resurfaced neighboring basketball hardscape to host events, or simply lend itself toward various casual recreational activities. With relatively little level landscape within close proximity to the heart of Dante, this space is invaluable as well as versatile.



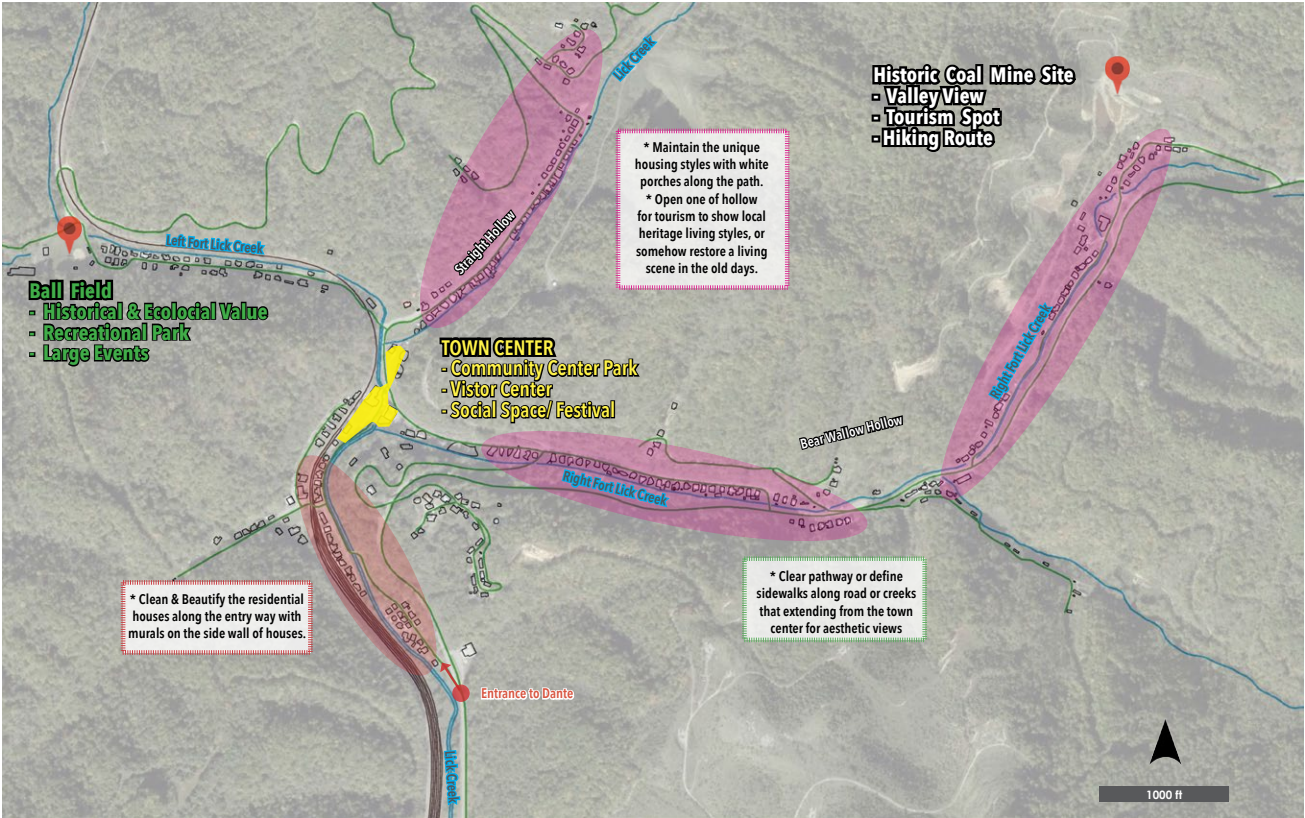
Excessive runoff and erosion can be reduced by utilizing a "rain garden". The garden serves functionally to capture runoff and improve water quality before it reenters the water table, as well as beautifying outdoor spaces with vegetation. In this case, the rain garden serves additionally as a boundary threshold between the road and the outdoor park.



The stage can serve a variety of purposes, such as being a place to post information about going's-on in the community, or hosting a small local concert that could potentially draw a respectable crowd of locals and visitors alike. Moveable seating and or pop-up tents can be placed around this area during events.



Existing Constraints	Opportunities & Values	Solutions
Lack of refined public social space Lack of connectivity and wayfinding Lack of industry for economic development Limit of space between the valley	Beautiful landscape & Views from hill Rich Heritage, Culture & History Bio-diversity/Ecological Environment	Define town center public space Connect places of interest with wayfinding Themed trails, touring historical sites & heritage village Marketing based on town characters, festivals & events



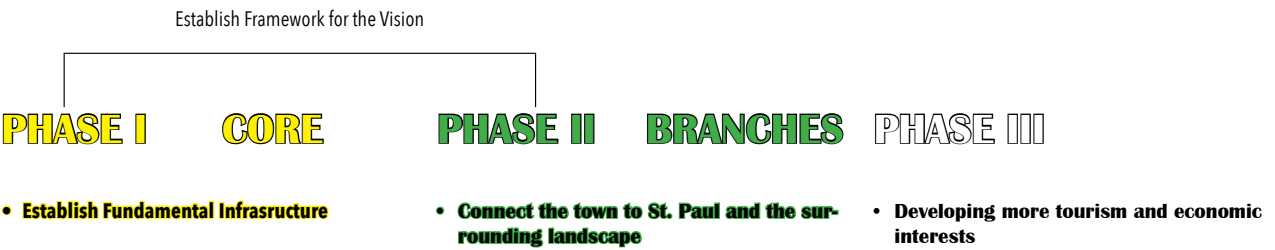
STRATEGIC PLAN

Goals:

- To strengthen the sense of community within the Town of Dante by developing their public gathering spaces.
- To attract investment to the town by connecting it to the Spearhead trail system.

Objectives:

- Creating public space to engage the members of community by redefining fundamental infrastructure space
- Community Identity
- Explore Natural resources and Heritage History for Tourism

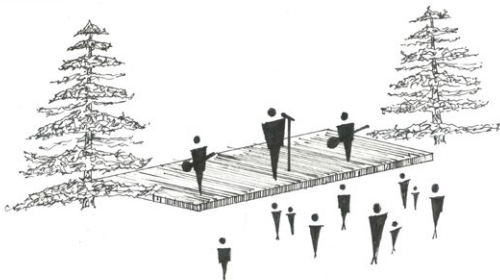


PHASE I Focus - Town Center Plan Conceptual Design



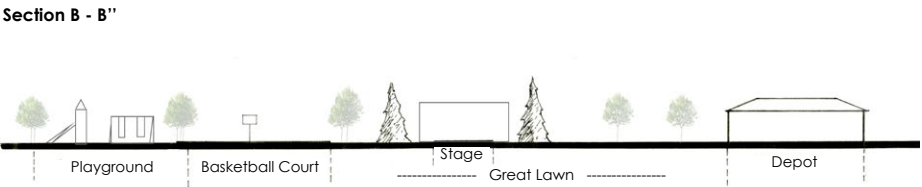
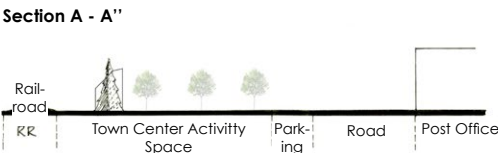
View to the Basketball Court and Playground

- Proposed Visitor Center**
 - Information Center
 - Maps
 - Restrooms
 - Touring Shuttle Bus
- Dante Coal Miners & Railroad Museum**
- Proposed Playground**
 - Parents and people can watch kids playing nearby trees/under tree canopy.
- Recondition the existing Basketball Court**
- Proposed Antique Store (in phase III)**
- Relocate the Performing Stage**
 - Centralize the activities and events for accommodating more people on the Great Lawn
- Proposed Deli**
 - Local Special Food
 - Outdoor tables and seatings with tree canopies
 - Restrooms



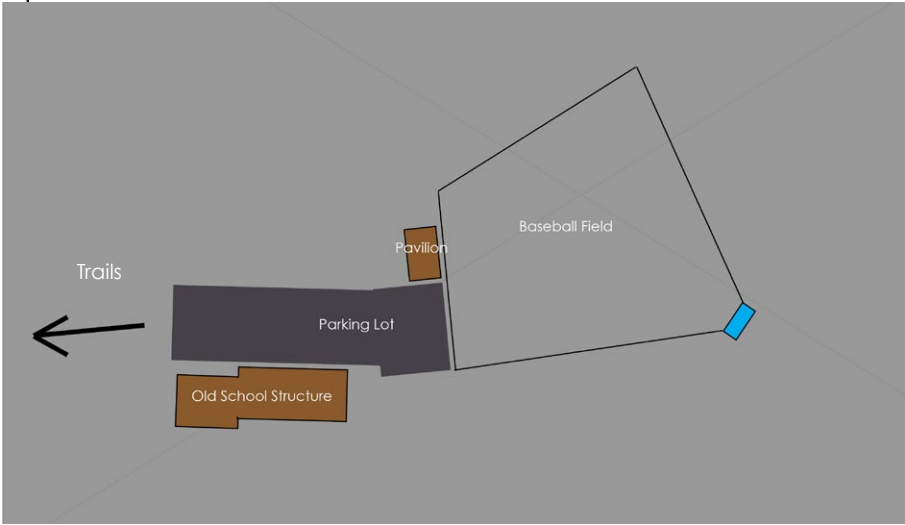
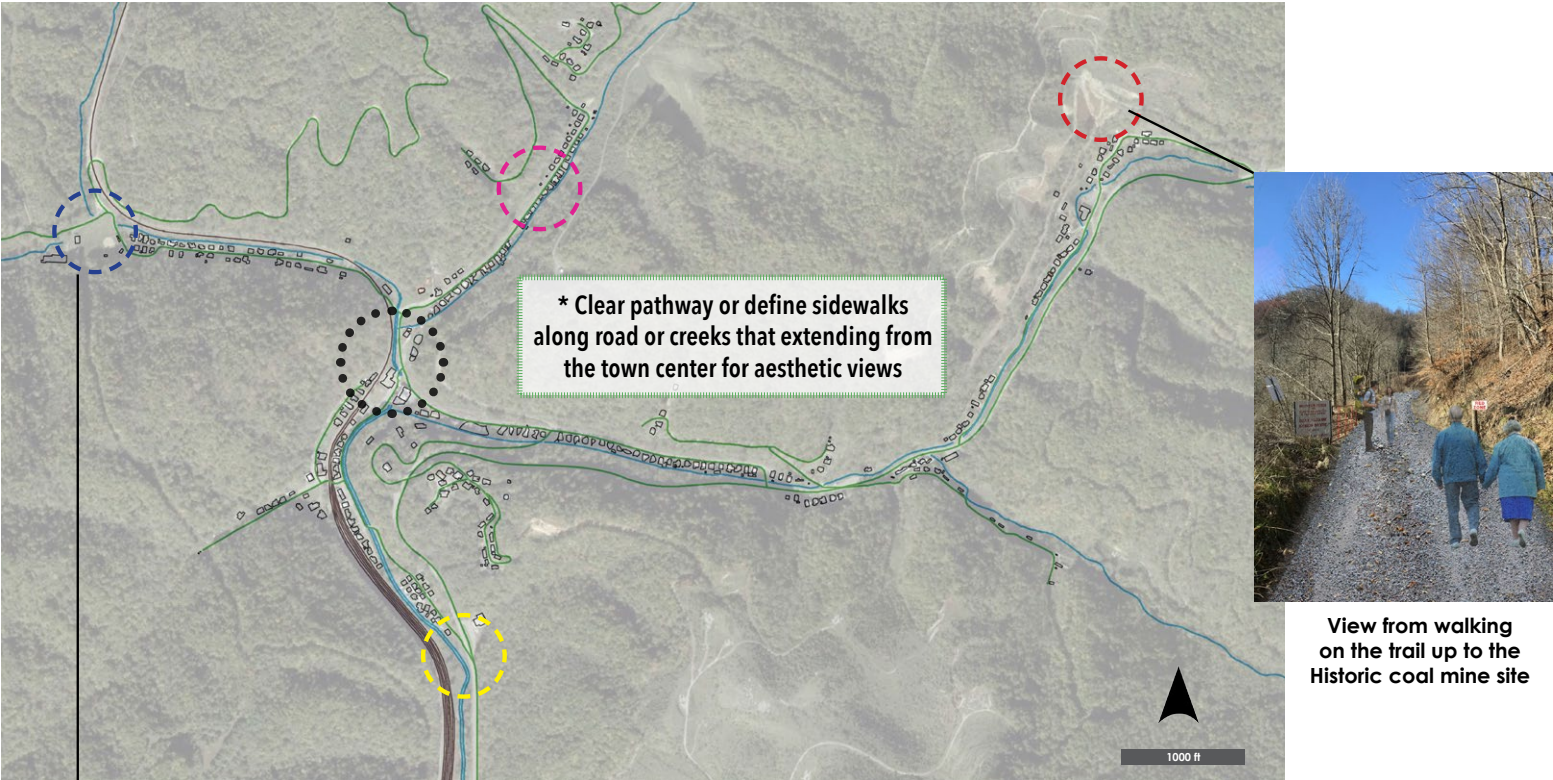
Sketch of the center performing stage

SECTIONS



PHASE II Reach-out Bridges - Trail System
FOCUS - Ball Field - Recreational Event Space & Trailhead

The process of phase 2 is to connect the newly developed town of Dante with St. Paul through the existing Spearhead Mountain View trail. These connections will provide the much needed traffic into Dante and foster the potential for economic and infrastructure development, all while visitors are enjoying their time on the trails in the beautiful Appalachian landscape. There are many possible locations around Dante to connect to the trails: at the end of each hollow, at the baseball field area, and from the town center among others. The trails could also lead to various viewpoints such as the old fire tower, and provide history and information if there were to run along the restored GOB sites. The best place for the main trailhead would be the baseball field area, as there is ample room for parking, the old school could be reused as a trail information and bathroom center, and the increased traffic could increase the use of the baseball field. Phase 2 is an important step in reconnecting Dante, but it is not the last. Once the town is connected through the trails, it needs to be able to support the people who visit and stay.



Phase 2 Includes a slight redesign of the baseball field area.

- The baseball field and pavilion will stay as is.
- The old school building could either be gutted and reused as an information center with restrooms for the trail extension; or it could be left with construction frameworks as a structural shelter for various events, activities, outdoor classroom space, and etc.
- Part of the the existing playground area would be converted to parking lot, paved, gravel, or otherwise.
- The large black arrow will be the direction in which the trail head will be oriented and will flow out into the landscape.

PHASE III - Future economic development and Tourist Strategies

The process of phase 3 is to bring outside interest into Dante by way of economic development. A list of ideas are listed:

- Coal mine tours with shuttle bus from the proposed visitor center
- Bear Hollow Exhibition Mine with cleaned lighted tunnel and tunnel cars.
- Further beautification such as murals for community identity
- More tourist investment such as "Ridge Runner", an example from Bluefield, WV
- Add an annex building to the museum to show more heritage history
- Restore old day living houses and living scens for tours

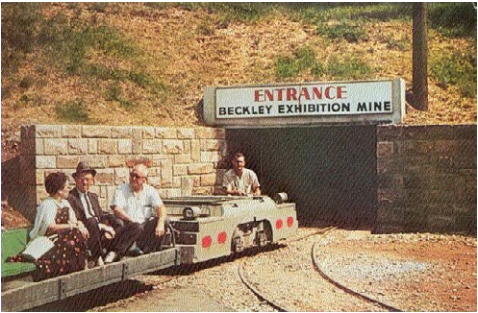


Tour Shuttle Bus/Van



"Ridge Runner", an interesting coal town programmed activity in Bluefield, WV

- Model train show on festivals
- Train Motel
- Holiday Lights / Firework Show
- Foods Festival
- Train Gala/ Music Gala
- Baseball tournaments
- Small shop development



Exhibition Mine Example & Exhibition Mine Car

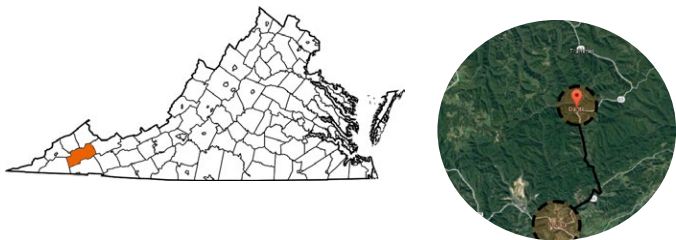


More themed murals for enhancing the community identity and sense of pride

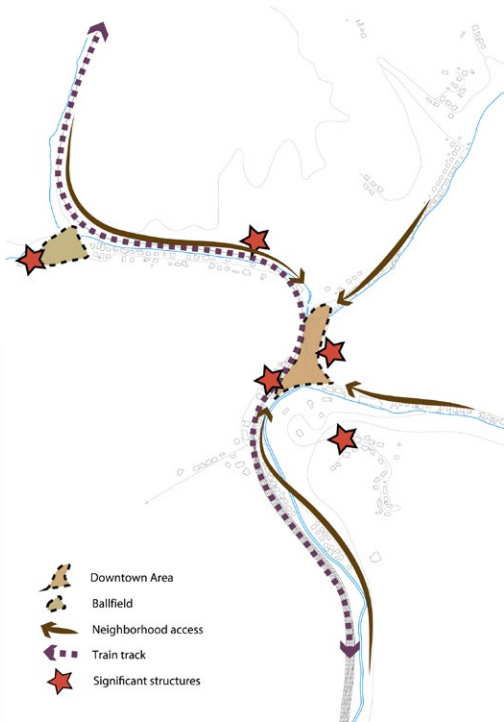
Signage & Wayfinding Ideas



DANTE, VIRGINIA



Circulation Concept

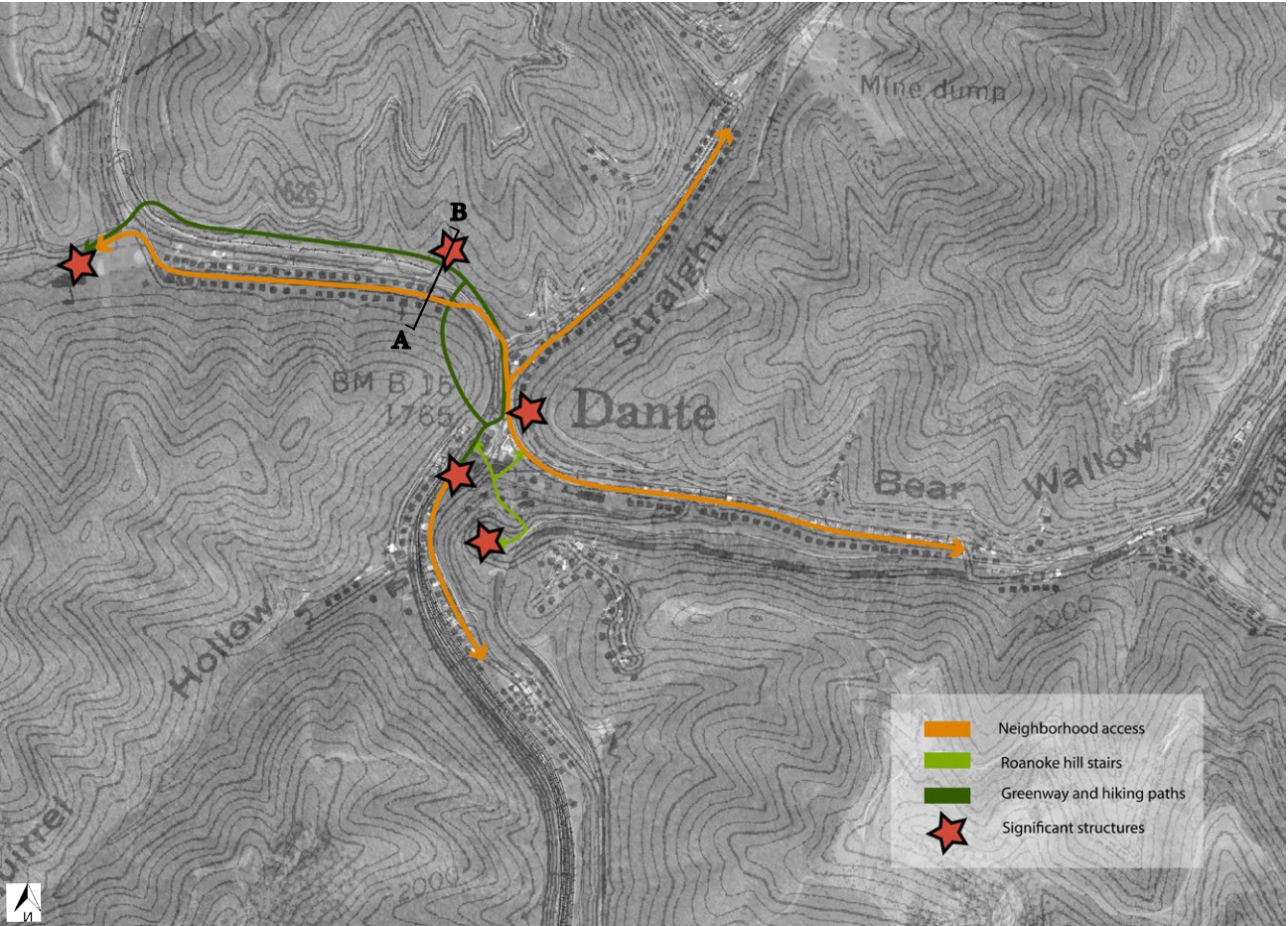


- Objectives:**
- Create system of green spaces and hiking trails connecting the downtown area with significant landmarks
 - Establish Dante as a more pedestrian friendly town
 - Provide access to historic areas
 - Utilize existing railroad infrastructure as a framework for trails

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

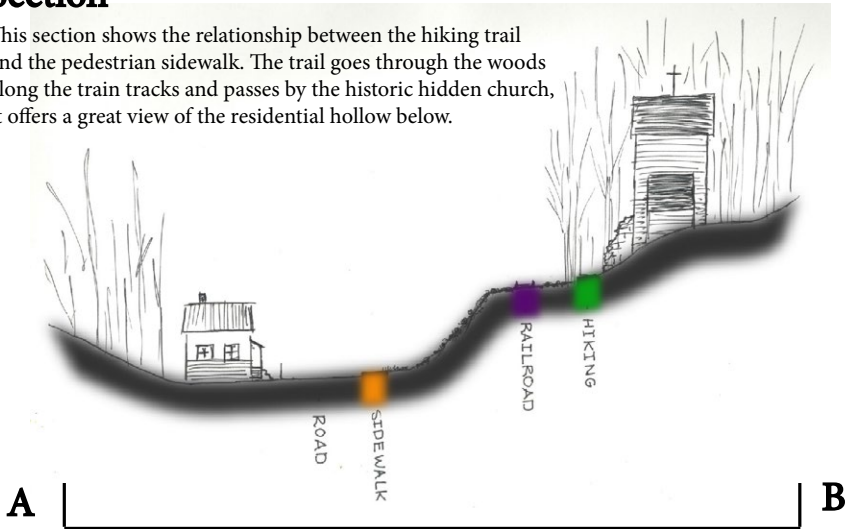
Goal: To create a cohesive greenspace plan that attracts people to Dante while still being an asset to those who live there.

Circulation Master plan



Section

This section shows the relationship between the hiking trail and the pedestrian sidewalk. The trail goes through the woods along the train tracks and passes by the historic hidden church. It offers a great view of the residential hollow below.



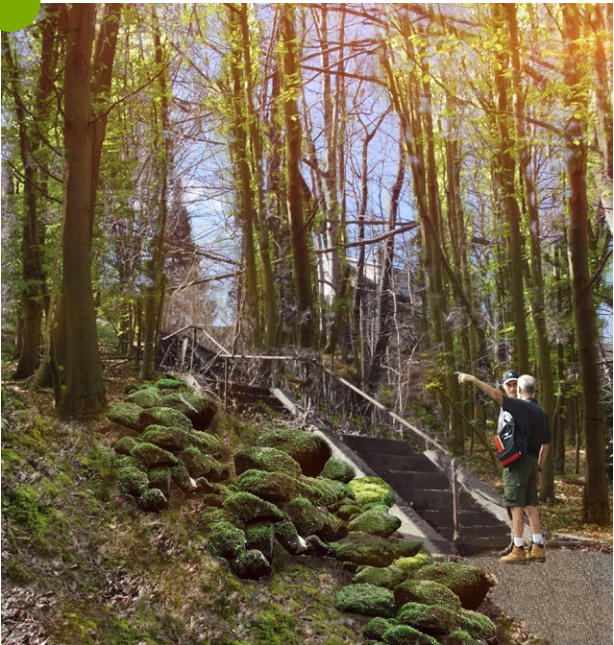
Depot Trail



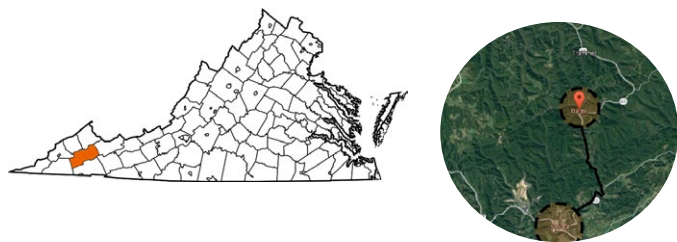
Path to the Hidden Church



Roanoke Hill Stairs

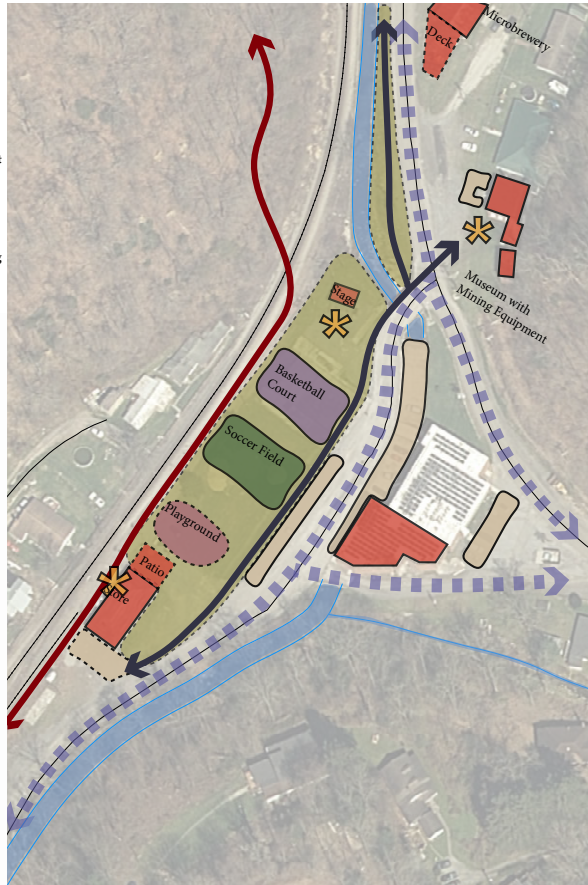


DANTE, VIRGINIA



Circulation Concept

- Legend
- Significant Buildings
 - Existing Parking
 - Proposed Parking
 - Proposed Green Space
 - Existing Basketball Court
 - Proposed Playground
 - Historic/Social Space
 - Pedestrian Circulation
 - Proposed Cycling/Hiking Route
 - Existing Car Flow
 - Lick Creek



Goal: Create a cohesive greenspace plan that attracts people to the town while still being an asset to those who live there

Objectives:

- Create a space suitable to festivals and visitors.
- Create a restorative landscape for those who work from home.
- Connect the museum to the central greenspace.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY



Case Study:

- Damascus, Virginia
- Population: 802
 - Primarily tourist economy
 - Intersection of the Appalachian and Va Creeper Trails
 - ”Trail Town USA”
 - Fully embraces and utilizes surrounding natural resources
 - Highly walkable
 - Centralized park space similar to Dante’s
 - Community engagement, festivals, and events draw in tourists from around the country and world.
 - ”Appalachian Trail Days” attendance: 20,000-30,000 yearly



Stage for Festivals



Outdoor Museum



New Entrance Sign



GROWING A COMMUNITY IN DANTE VIRGINIA



MAIN OBJECTIVES:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION



SUSTAINABLE LIVING



STIMULATE ECONOMY



PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY TO WORK TOGETHER TO SUCCESSFULLY ENHANCE THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF DANTE WILL INSTILL A SENSE OF PRIDE WITHIN THE RESIDENTS. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS, FOSTERS A SENSE OF BELONGING IN PARTICIPANTS, AND PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN NEW SKILLS.



UPCYCLING, RECYCLING, AND COMPOSTING ALL SAVE MONEY AND REDUCE ENERGY USE NECESSARY FOR PRODUCING RAW MATERIALS. INTRODUCING THESE SYSTEMS TO DANTE WILL HELP THE COMMUNITY FIND NEW LIFE IN WHAT SURROUNDS THEM AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP EFFORTS. EDUCATING ON AND PROVIDING THE COMMUNITY WITH THESE SIMPLE SYSTEMS WILL PROVOKE FURTHER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE AESTHETICS OF THE COMMUNITY.



INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS ENSURES ALL RESIDENTS ARE FOOD SECURE, AND REDUCES THE RESOURCES, SUCH AS MONEY AND ENERGY, REQUIRED TO TRAVEL LONGER DISTANCES TO FIND HEALTHY FOODS. TENDING TO A COMMUNITY GARDEN HELPS CONTRIBUTE TO AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE AND REDUCE RISKS OF DISEASES, SUCH AS OBESITY. GARDENING HAS MANY ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS, SUCH AS INCREASING BIODIVERSITY IN THE AREA AND IMPROVING ON AIR QUALITY. COMMUNITY GARDENS HELP EDUCATE PARTICIPANTS ON HOW TO IMPROVE DIETARY HABITS AND CREATE A HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIP BET WEEN PEOPLE AND FOOD.



COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAMS PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. A COMMUNITY GARDEN, ONCE ESTABLISHED, CAN PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELLING FRESH PRODUCE AT LOCAL MARKETS, AND CAN ENCOURAGE OUT-OF-TOWNER'S TO VISIT THE TOWN OF DANTE.

COMMUNITY GARDEN CONCEPT PLAN:



1. OPEN AIR PAVILION

2. OUTDOOR SEATING AREA

3. COMPOST/ RECYCLING/ STORAGE CONTAINERS
4. REPURPOSED WOOD PLANTING BEDS

5. DANTE MURAL WALL

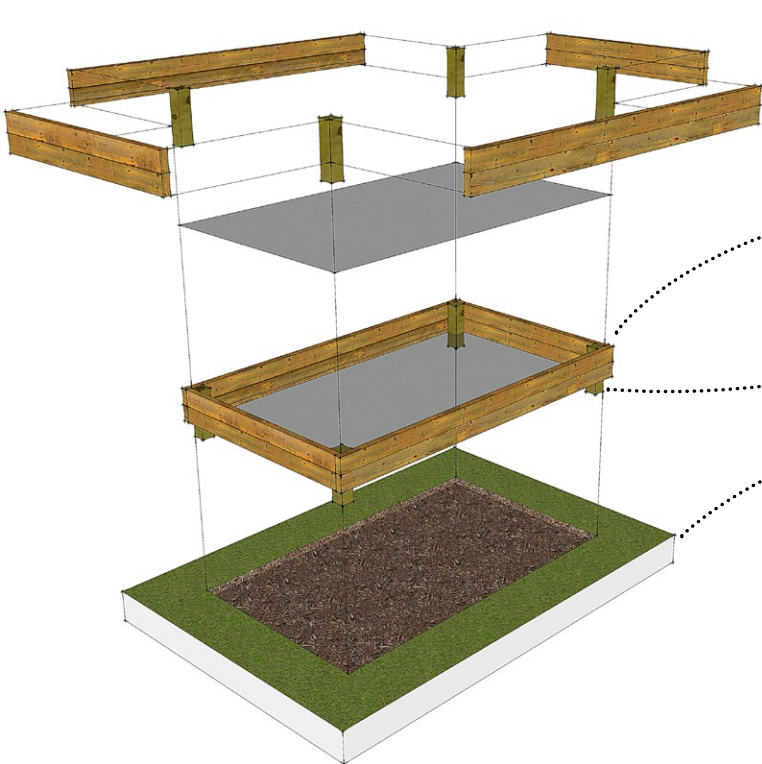
6. IMPROVED SEATING FOR BASKETBALL COURT

GROWING A COMMUNITY IN DANTE VIRGINIA



OUR COMMUNITY GARDEN DESIGN PROVIDES A SIMPLE AND AFFORDABLE SOLUTION TO A LACK OF AMENITY AND COMMUNITY SPACE IN DANTE. THIS DESIGN ENCOURAGES ALL TO GET INVOLVED AND TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR TOWN. A MAIN SOURCE OF MATERIALS FOR THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND LOCALLY AROUND DANTE, SUCH AS REPURPOSED WOOD FROM DILAPIDATED HOUSING.

SIMPLE HOW TO'S:



BUILDING A PLANTING BED OUT OF REPURPOSED WOOD

- STEP 1: MEASURE, MARK, AND CUT WOOD BOARDS FOR WALLS AND POSTS.
- STEP 2: DRILL PILOT HOLES AND CONNECT ALL SIDES WITH SCREWS. USE SAME TECHNIQUE TO ATTACH POSTS TO THE INSIDE OF THE FRAME.
- STEP 3: STAPLE WIDE MESH HARDWARE CLOTH TO THE BOTTOM OF THE FRAME. THIS WILL KEEP WEEDS OUT WHILE ALLOWING WORMS IN.
- STEP 4: LOOSEN DIRT AND REMOVE GRASS WHERE BEDS WILL BE PLACED.
- STEP 5: IF WOOD IS NOT ROT RESISTANT, COVER INSIDE FACE WITH HEAVY-DUTY PLASTIC.
- STEP 6: FILL BED WITH SOIL AND COMPOST AND BEGIN PLANTING.



VIEW OF THE COMMUNITY GARDEN



VIEW OF THE PAVILION AND OUTDOOR SEATING AREA

BUILDING A FUTURE:

REPURPOSING WOOD AND THE UPCYCLING OF ANY USABLE MATERIAL IS A VERY BENEFICIAL PRACTICE, IT NOT ONLY HELPS TO RECYCLE OTHERWISE UNUSABLE MATERIALS, BUT IT HELPS CLEAN UP UNSIGHTLY AREAS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD. BY RECLAIMING MATERIALS FROM ABANDON AND STRUCTURALLY UNSTABLE BUILDINGS, THE RESTORED MATERIALS CAN BE USED TO FIX BUILDINGS IN NEED OF REPAIR OR UPKEEP, OR USED TO MAKE FURNITURE/WOOD PRODUCTS OF ANY TYPE. THE DESIGN PROVIDES STORAGE SHEDS FOR COLLECTED MATERIALS, ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO DO THEIR PART IN CLEANING UP. RECLAIMING BUILDING MATERIALS TO BE REUSED OR TURNED INTO SOMETHING NEW CAN LEAD TO A NEW INDUSTRY OVER TIME. CREATING WELL CRAFTED ITEMS USING LOCAL RESOURCES CAN BRING IN AN ALTERNATIVE REVENUE AND GIVE NEW PURPOSE TO THE TOWN OF DANTE.

THE PROCESS:

- STEP 1: LOCATE AND COLLECT THE WOOD
- STEP 2: PULL NAILS FROM THE WOOD
- STEP 3: SAND THE WOOD OR PLANE DOWN DEPENDING ON USE
- STEP 4: CUT THE WOOD IF NEEDED
- STEP 5: ASSEMBLE THE WOOD INTO WHATEVER IT IS BEING REPURPOSED AS
- STEP 6: STAIN THE WOOD IF DESIRED
- STEP 7: USE THE WOOD FOR THE USE IT WAS MADE

Reshaping Railroad Heritage to Restore a Coal Community



Issues Addressed

- General Aesthetics
- Lack of youth activities
- Lack of local businesses
- Underutilization of local assets (depot, creek, rail)

Opportunities

- Creek
- Greenspace
- Buildings (depot, steam building and store frontage)
- Railroad
- History/ heritage
- Willingness of townspeople to contribute/ volunteer

Phase 1 (2 Years)

- Beautification
 - Volunteer clean up
 - Weeding, planting, trash, mow
- Addition of playground and train stage
- Fix basketball court
- Start moving parking behind apartments
- Clean and create clear boundaries between roads and grass.

Phase 2 (5 Years)

- Depot revitalization/ pavilion remodeling
- 1 traincar food area
- Installation of seating areas, picnic etc.
- New parking
- Repave roads (Primary and secondary)
- Walking trail
- Daylight stream

Phase 3 (10 Years)

- General landscaping
- Pavers installation for seating areas outside buildings
- Add stores/ remodel old store fronts
- Bring in local art
- Final Beautification
- Possibly add traincars
- Begin investigating for new local attractions



Dante Community Revitalization

Luke Morgan Holly WaterWman Airl Barrientos Patrick Cheek

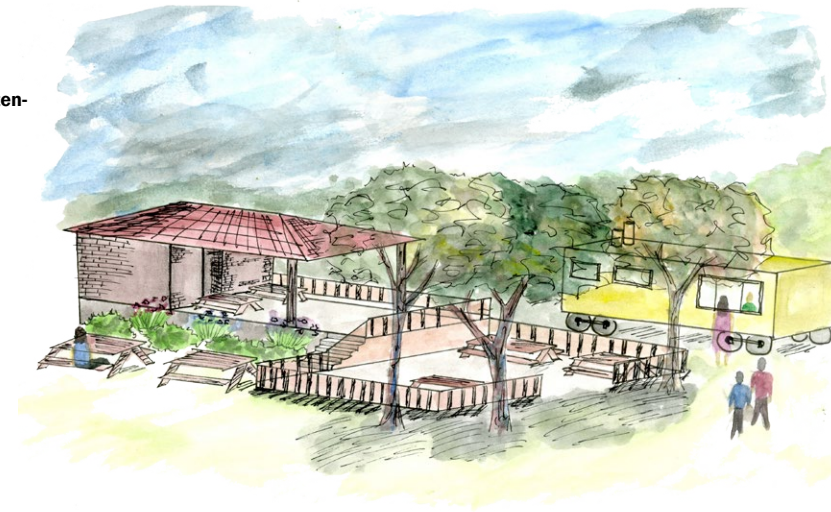


Steam building

- General beautification of outdoors
- Facade refurbishing
- Grass seating and nature rehabilitation

Remodeled depot building

- Partial covered pavilion
- Bathroom and info center indoors
- Outdoor seating and picnic area
- Parking for remodled traincar (potential food venue)

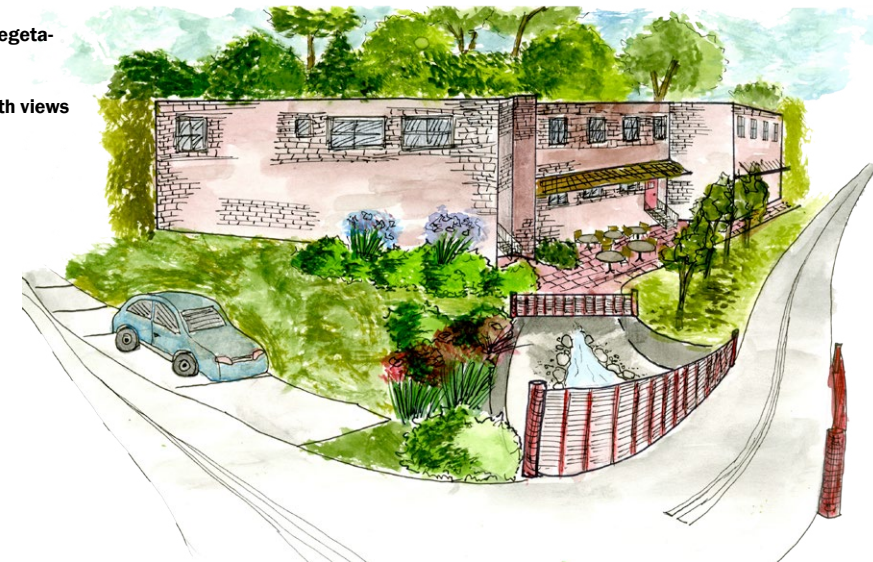


Remodled Storefront

- Creating enjoyable walkable spaces
- Opening up small stores for townspeople

Main downtown building

- Daylight portion of the creek
- Introductory beautification of vegetation
- Additional parralell parking
- Awning and outdoor seating with views of creek and greenspace



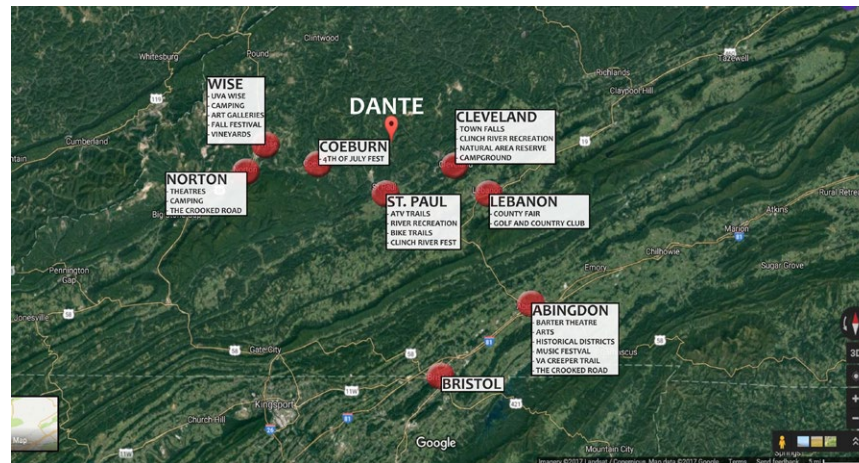
The Potential for Dante

Rebirth of a music town

- Potential to become a premier destination on the bluegrass festival tour
- Give prominence to the town of Dante and generate town funds
- Attract all generations ang further the towns sense of community

A festival venue

- Versitile spaces can be used for festivals while providing everyday use as well
- Potential for seasonal attraction



Dante Community Revitalization

Luke Morgan Holly Waterman Airl Barrientos Patrick Cheek