**Main Street West Virginia partners in projects to restore industrial sites to economic life**

After a career as an industrial or commercial site, some locations need a makeover to spring back into a useful new life.

Several sites around the state are getting a helping hand from Main Street West Virginia and the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center (NBAC). They are partnering through the NBAC’s West Virginia Redevelopment Collaborative (WVRC) to remediate project sites in participating Main Street and ON TRAC communities. The WVRC assembles multi-disciplinary teams to give communities the expertise and guidance needed to redevelop the property for the greatest economic, environmental or social good.

Read more about the projects in Martinsburg, Berkeley County; Fairmont, Marion County; Charleston, Kanawha County; and Parkersburg, Wood County.

Main Street West Virginia is a program of the West Virginia Development Office. It focuses on economic development of historic downtown and neighborhood commercial districts by providing technical services, design assistance and continuous training of board and committee members and program managers using the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Four-Point Approach®. A creation of Main Street West Virginia, ON TRAC (Organization and Training for Revitalization and Capacity) helps towns with community improvement and development.

The West Virginia Redevelopment Collaborative (WVRC) assembles multidisciplinary teams of faculty and experts to provide West Virginia communities with expertise and guidance to get the most economic, environmental, and social benefit from the re-use of former industrial sites called brownfields. Funded by the [Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation](http://www.benedum.org/), the WVRC is a program of the [Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center](http://www.wvbrownfields.org) in Morgantown. For more in-depth coverage of these projects, visit the WVRC: Main Street Edition on <http://wvredevelopment.org/collaborative-project-profiles/>.

**Project: Matthews Foundry**, Martinsburg

A 19th century stone building, Matthews Foundry had seen years of industrial use before retiring into dilapidated old age. In 2013, Main Street Martinsburg won a $5,750 WVRC grant to devise a marketing plan for the property, which includes environmental, structural and historical assessments. The environmental study found no major contamination, clearing the way to pursuing a new future for the half-acre property in the downtown district. A restaurant with microbrewery currently stands as the most popular redevelopment idea. Carrie Staton, WVRC coordinator, expects a feasibility study to be released by early May 2014.

**Project: Firehouse**, Fairmont

The historic building on Monroe Street opened in 1915 as a firehouse — and now has a chance to reopen as an artists’ space. Main Street Fairmont received a $5,000 WVRC grant for a structural assessment of the site and for roof repairs. Currently partners Main Street Fairmont and WVRC contemplate transforming the building into film, theater and art studios and performance space.

**Project: Sunoco lot,** Charleston

The former Sunoco station sits on a lot on the corner, its empty fuel storage tanks plucked out of the ground. The station is out of business today – but may not be without purpose for much longer. The West Side Main Street used a $5,750 WVRC grant to partner with the WV Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) to assess the site for potential contaminants. The WVDEP found nothing significant. The finding makes easier to redevelop the lot for new uses. West Side Main Street and WVRC are partnering on community surveys to identify new visions of what it could become. WVRC is putting together information packets with market analysis, community survey results, environmental reports and other data prospective developers may need.

**Project: Marketplace of Ideas,** Parkersburg

The Citizens United Bank building in the ON TRAC community of Parkersburg could become a showcase for sustainable downtown revitalization efforts. Downtown PKG advocates repurposing structures into space where people can live, work and play. The vision calls for the bank building to house commercial retail enterprises on the first level, offices on the upper floors and residential accommodations on the top floors. With a $2,000 WVRC grant, Downtown PKG plans to secure sketches and a report documenting the scope of what can be done and what would be required to accomplish it. Local team members are talking to potential developers about the possibilities.