

## **AWARDS**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **THREE WEST VIRGINIA PROJECTS WIN WVASLA AWARDS Projects Span Community Revitalization Planning Projects to Detailed Parks and Recreation Development**

**Roanoke, West Virginia, December 5, 2015** — The West Virginia Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (WVASLA) has announced three projects have been recognized for outstanding landscape architectural design at the 2015 WVASLA Awards Banquet held at the Stonewall Resort on December 5<sup>th</sup> near Roanoke, West Virginia.

Designed by Michael Baker Jr., Inc., Virginia's Chapel Roadside Park received a Merit Award in the General Design category for improvements to the historic roadside attraction. Located in Cedar Grove, Virginia's Chapel, also known as the Little Red Brick Church, was built in 1853 by a local entrepreneur. The chapel, which is located on U.S. 60's Midland Trail Scenic Highway, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, and is currently used for weddings, funerals, and holiday church services. The new roadside park was funded primarily by a Federal Highway Administration Transportation Enhancement Grant, and features porous asphalt pavement, pervious concrete walkways, a bio-retention rain garden, and visitor amenities such as a gazebo, picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles, and interpretive signage.

The awards jury described Virginia's Chapel Park as providing "strong attention to context and watershed protection." The judges further "appreciate the effort to restore and preserve the historic landmark and incorporate it into the design" of the park improvements.

In the Planning and Analysis category, two Honor Awards were given to GAI Consultants, Inc., for their efforts on the Kanawha City Corridor Study, and the Slack Plaza – Brawley Walkway Master Plan projects.

The Kanawha City Corridor Study addressed the pedestrian problems that have resulted from the migration of our Nation's dependence on the motor vehicle as the primary mode of transportation. What began as a community originally planned to revolve around its residents, over time Kanawha City has seen its role reversed due to the dominance of the automobile, causing its residents to be disconnected from their surroundings, while losing its sense of identity in the process. The Plan identified a collection of initiatives which will create a framework that can be used by the City of Charleston as a guide for implementation of renovation and future development projects. Recommendations for each district in Kanawha City will help the City to create a more livable community within the Corridor. Finally, the recommendations are rounded out with suggestions for the improvement of MacCorkle Avenue, the main transportation corridor of the community. These included streetscape changes including lighting improvements, sidewalk adjustments, parking redesign, and the addition of street trees, and potentially placing the road on a diet by narrowing and reducing the number of lanes to create a more pedestrian focused environment.

The awards jury called the design "a thorough and well defined display, and explanation of the new code interpretation and how it influences planning analysis for the corridor". They further commented on the "well defined walkability circles", "thorough presentation of research to include analysis, concept design and master planning", and the "excellent description of Charleston and how the corridor is influenced by context."

Also developed by GAI Consultants, Inc., the Slack Plaza – Brawley Walkway Master Plan received an Honor Award in the Planning and Analysis category. Located in Downtown Charleston, Slack Plaza and the Brawley Walkway exists as a vital pedestrian link connecting the downtown business district to major retail and entertainment amenities. The existing plaza and walkways had become tired and in disrepair

over the years, and as a result, became virtually unutilized by the nine to five crowd. To breathe fresh air into the plaza, the design team analyzed the factors contributing to the underutilization of the plaza, and responded with a design that will ultimately reenergize the space and invite new users into the urban landscape. GAI's solution was to provide an expansive multi-use lawn in the core of the plaza that will transform a bleak hardscape into a vibrant and active park. The proposed lawn mall is surrounded by a cobblestone walking trail, an outdoor dining space, and a stone seating terrace, all of which are wrapped in lush vegetation. Extending beyond the park to the east and west are two linear walkways that connect the downtown core and commercial districts.

The awards judges described the plan as "a clear and concise explanation of the analysis conducted on this downtown corridor" and that it "drives an effective and well thought out master plan". Further, the jury suggested the plan was an "intelligent use of analysis to drive pedestrian use in the downtown corridor".

#### *About the American Society of Landscape Architects*

Founded in 1899, ASLA is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 15,000 members in 49 professional chapters and 72 student chapters. Members of the Society use "ASLA" after their names to denote membership and their commitment to the highest ethical standards of the profession. Landscape architects lead the stewardship, planning and design of our built and natural environments; the Society's mission is to advance landscape architecture through advocacy, communication, education and fellowship.

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