The idea of RE-PLACE is to re-inject a distinct sense of livability and cultural identity into the hollow main streets of post-industrial towns by introducing vibrant civic architecture at their centers. To RE-PLACE is to engender a renewed sense of place. Covington and Clifton Forge, Virginia are representative of many previously prosperous American towns, struggling to survive as the industries, which fueled their growth, continue to abandon them. Tucked within a small valley along the Jackson River, these Appalachian towns face severe urban challenges. Deserted storefronts, empty houses, and decaying infrastructure all contribute to an underlying sense of abandonment. In this context, the Covington Farmers Market and the Clifton Forge Amphitheatre aim to act as catalysts for revitalization. RE-PLACE aspires to serve as a model for other communities to rediscover and celebrate their own uniqueness of place.

Digital fabrication plays a substantial role in RE-PLACE by pushing existing local industry to realize their potential and to expand into emerging markets: steel shops have expanded into CNC production, truss manufacturers have realized that their existing CNC production line allows for mass-customization rather than simply mass-production and sawmills have realized a new market in Appalachian hard wood decking.

RE-BUILD

In Clifton Forge, RE-PLACE sought to relocate the visual, audible and environmental pollution of a tire retreading facility from the heart of downtown to a proper industrial facility. Although the business was successful, its operations were dispersed among several buildings and properties. Relocating the facility consolidated its operations and, at the height of the recession, doubled its productivity and workforce. The formerly industrial site was transformed into a public amphitheatre and park.

In Covington, RE-PLACE sought to rethink the use of a crumbling asphalt lot that was left vacant by the demolishing of a fast food restaurant. A group of entrepreneurial farmers began setting up a marketplace and found a market for their produce and homemade goods. The hole in the urban fabric was transformed into a permanent Market Pavilion. Materials to build the Farmers Market, including recycled asphalt, heart-pine cladding and galvanized metal, were salvaged and repurposed from the derelict warehouse at the former site of the tire-retreading facility in neighboring Clifton Forge.
Back in Clifton Forge, removal of the tire re-treading operation and the re-purposing of its blighted warehouse left a gash in the cityscape. The newly developed site redefined the urban fabric by providing much needed public space at the centrally located cree-side site. A park and amphitheatre serve to link together the fragments of a blighted and based re-occupation of neighboring buildings. The amphitheatre is an unrestricted cultural anchor that belongs to the community at large. It is a vibrant center of spontaneous public gathering that revitalizes the downtown, supports local businesses, promotes community activities, nurtures the arts, and gives access to cultural activities to a broad cross section of the community. The delicate curves of the amphitheatre are the expression of a creative and forward leaning community.