

# Brownfields

## Success Story

### “Treasured Past, Innovative Future” Altavista, Virginia

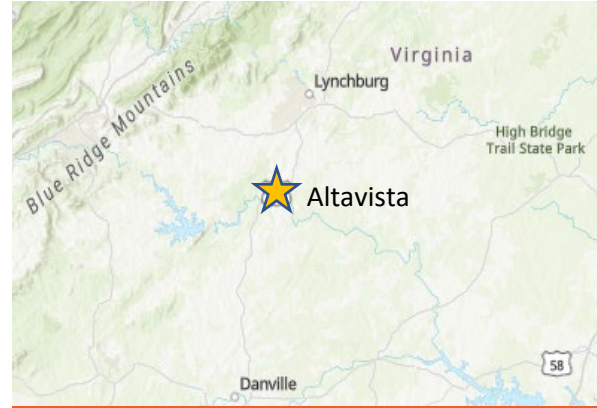
Altavista’s motto gives a glimpse into this small town’s treasured way of life. In 1905, Altavista was founded amidst the great railroad expansion by three Lane brothers, entrepreneurs with visions of business and industrial growth, all while nurturing their small town with strong community values. Altavista thrived under this platform for many years, with new neighborhoods and small businesses spanning across its unique location, alongside the beautiful Staunton River, and industry soon followed. Altavista expanded its initial territory of 1.87 square miles to five (5) square miles, and secured its recognition as a hub of opportunity in Campbell County.

The Town of Altavista’s location between the cities of Danville and Lynchburg gives the town an advantage in offering its citizens and visitors a unique small-town experience. Altavista boasts many natural amenities, such as community and neighborhood parks, including an extensive trail system, a splash pad, and two river access points for boating/kayaking. The Town also contributes to a family-friendly spirit with a variety of places for worship, a community-focused YMCA, and a community bus service (Altavista Community Transit System) that runs six days a week. Altavista strives to honor its treasured history, and maintain a great place to work, live, and play.

Like many small towns, Altavista has experienced its share of hardships over the years, but its historic foundation and determination to persevere has sustained the Town’s presence in Campbell County. When the Lane Company closed in the 1990s, and Burlington Industries (just across the river) closed in 2007, Altavista sought to spark economic growth by creating a strategic plan for retaining its existing industry, and attracting new prospective industries and businesses.

### The Opportunity

Continuing its focus on economic growth, Altavista collaborated with its Economic Development Authority to bring broadband access to its Downtown District, with plans of expanding the service across the entire town. Existing downtown businesses began taking advantage of incentive programs to improve their facades, and new small-business owners were showing interest in the downtown area. The Town quickly recognized the need for an “incubator” space for small business entrepreneurs, and began the process of securing plans and funding for the project.



**EPA Grant Recipient:**  
Altavista, VA

**Grant Type**  
Community-wide Assessment

**Former Uses:**  
Fire Station

**Current/Future Uses:**  
Co-working and makerspace facility





Historic Altavista Fire Station in Downtown Altavista.

*“The Town of Altavista is proud to have the Spark Innovation Center as part of its ongoing efforts to carry on its legacy of building great businesses, in support of economic security for future generations.”*

– Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager  
Altavista



The Spark Innovation Center opened in January 2023 offering 3,500 sq feet of co-working and makerspace. ([sparkinnovationcenter.com](http://sparkinnovationcenter.com))

**For more information:**

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at [www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields) or contact:

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Altavista’s Downtown District was once again buzzing with excitement in anticipation of the new co-working space; and the obvious location was the town’s old (vacant) firehouse. The Town went to work investigating its stability and safety from its original use, and the USEPA was a major part of this equation, by having Brownfields Grants available to assist localities with assessing such structures. The Town of Altavista utilized their Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant to complete the environmental assessments necessary to ensure the old firehouse was a viable location for the new center. Asbestos was discovered and removed under funding received from the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund (VBAF), allowing the project to move forward.

**Present**

In January 2023, the [Spark Innovation Center](http://Spark Innovation Center) opened in Downtown Altavista. The 3,500 sq foot co-working and makerspace was designed to help existing businesses that need office and/or meeting spaces, and to nurture small business entrepreneurs to develop and grow their business, without the stress of a lot of overhead cost.

The Center currently consists of four offices, two private phone booths, a large conference room capable of being divided into two smaller rooms, four dedicated cubicles with computers, and multiple seating/desk options for quick access; and is equipped with a 3D Lab for creative minds, a commercial printer for bulk services; and a small kitchenette, and restrooms round out the amenities. The Spark Center’s four offices were quickly occupied, leaving the Town to consider also renovating the second floor in the near future.

Founded more than 100 years ago by entrepreneurs seeking an opportunity to achieve the American dream, Altavista has seen many great businesses and industries join its growing town. The Town of Altavista is proud to have the Spark Innovation Center as part of its ongoing efforts to carry on its legacy of building great businesses, in support of economic security for future generations.

