

V. Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas

A. *Beautification and Community Design*

“Gordonsville is a pretty town”—this sentiment was expressed over and over again in responses to the community survey and during the community meetings held during the update of the plan. Window boxes, tree lined streets and homes evocative of Gordonsville’s past are what people see when they look down the streets of Town. Residents of the Town take pride in their homes and it shows through their well-maintained properties; shop owners in downtown keep the planters in front of their shops filled with seasonal vegetation, adding vibrancy and color to Main Street.



The Town’s Public Works Department makes it their top priority to ensure the streets are always clean and neat looking, and the grounds around Town Hall, Verling Park and the traffic circle are well-maintained at all times of the year. In the spring and fall of each year, the Town conducts a two-week clean up where residents can dispose of unwanted items, yard waste, leaves, etc., which helps to keep the town attractive.

Christmas is an especially pretty time of year for the town because of the beautifully lighted trees that highlight the landscape from the traffic circle to the downtown area, all courtesy of the Town’s hard-working public works employees. People traveling through town during Christmas delight in the magical display of lighted trees and carefully decorated shops—for many the town is a destination at Christmas more so than at other times of the year because of the beautiful holiday display.

1. Main Street Streetscape Plan

As the principal thoroughfare for the Town, Main Street in Gordonsville is what most people see when they drive through Town. Businesses at the circle transition to homes and churches, and back to businesses in downtown, as one travels from north to south along the street.

To protect the integrity of the Town's downtown business area and to make it a safer environment for pedestrian traffic, the Town has obtained funding through the federal [Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century \(TEA-21\)](#) to develop and construct a streetscape plan for downtown Main Street.



Project Area

The project area is Main Street between West King Street and Cobb Street in the Town of Gordonsville Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places (see map below).

Proposed Enhancements

The Town has developed a project scope, which includes the extension of sidewalk creating a link between the historic downtown business district and the historic Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum. Enhancements along the corridor include: replacement of deteriorating sidewalks, curb and guttering; rehabilitation of drainage structures; crosswalk safety and aesthetic improvements; installation of pedestrian-scaled street lighting and trees; development of a corridor directional signage plan; and aesthetic improvements to the railroad overpass bridge and retaining walls.

Proposed Timeline

Plans for the project were submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation in early fall 2011. Final plans will be presented to Town Council for consideration to proceed with bidding in mid 2012. Solicitations for construction bids are expected to be released by late fall 2012, with construction anticipated to begin by winter of 2013. Construction has been divided into 3 phases as shown on the rendering below. Phases one and two of the project are expected to be constructed together.

Proposed Budget:

Phase I	\$ 985,236
Phase II	\$ 959,916
Phase III	<u>\$ 520,990</u>
TOTAL PROJECT	\$2,466,142

Funding Breakdown:

\$ 313,282	1st grant award
\$ 457,000	2 nd grant award
\$ 91,000	funds transf. from Baker St.
<u>\$ 896,000</u>	3rd grant award
\$1,757,282	Total Grant Funds
<u>\$ 439,320</u>	Town's 20% match
\$2,196,602	TOTAL FUNDING DESIGNATED

2. Community Meeting and Survey Responses

Respondents to the community survey consistently indicated that one of the things they like most about the Town is its small town charm. Again and again, respondents stated that the Town is a pretty town and efforts should be made to keep it that way. Several respondents indicated that the gateways to the Town are important and planning for the enhancement of these entrance corridors should be pursued.

With regard to the Community meetings, several thoughts and ideas related to beautification and community design were noted and are listed below:

- Town is beautiful during the holidays and many people come to Town just to see the lights
- Work with owners of vacant property to keep lots nice looking
- Ensure that Power Company keeps electric lines clear
- Encourage underground utilities
- Pursue streetscape plan and lighting
- Develop a tree-replacement program (using street trees-not ornamentals) to maintain/establish the tree canopy in Town
- Put arm-posts on street lights for hanging flower baskets
- Encourage the placement of more window flower boxes
- More decoration of Main Street
- Maintain attractive rear-view of buildings on Main Street
- Institute a "Beautiful Gordonsville" contest
- Mural painting under the train bridge

Beautification Goal

Gordonsville will remain a "pretty town" that is attractive to the citizens living in Town, draws patrons to the existing businesses and encourages the location of new, and provides visitors a pleasant experience when they come to Town.

Objectives

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- To promote the renovation of existing structures so as to maintain the local character and identity of the community.
- To maintain and improve the unique character of the traffic circle as a location for ornamental flowers.
- To promote and support the use and care of ornamental plantings to beautify the area within the town and to encourage streetscape development.
- Encourage new or infill development to be designed and constructed so as to be compatible with the characteristics of structures found within the same neighborhood and zoning district.
- Keep vacant properties in Town from becoming overgrown and unsightly.
- Maintain/establish the tree canopy in Town.
- Encourage the continuing beautification of the downtown business area.
- Encourage the underground placement of electrical utilities in new development

Tasks

- Seek private funding for beautification projects.
- Seek grant funding, specifically TEA-2I grants, for enhancement of the gateways to town.
- Implement an "adopt a street or area" project.
- Develop an overall streetscape and landscaping plan for each of the gateways into town, including the traffic circle.
- Seek Town budget funding for beautification.
- Develop a tree-replacement program for the Town (using street trees, not ornamental trees).
- Work with the owners of vacant properties in Town to ensure property maintenance and upkeep.
- Work with local garden clubs to develop and maintain attractive landscaping on publicly owned property within the Town.
- Work with downtown business owners to make the rear of their businesses as attractive as the front of their establishments.
- Put arm-posts on street lights downtown for hanging baskets or special event banners.
- Implement the Main Street Streetscape Plan.
- Modify the zoning ordinance to require that electrical and other utilities be placed underground for new construction.