



Transportation

Since the days of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, Gordonsville has been a crossroads town. Roads that provided vital transportation routes between Charlottesville, Richmond and Washington, DC, during that time have evolved into present-day US Routes 15 and 33 and Virginia Route 231, all of which converge at the Gordonsville traffic circle and continue to provide crucial transportation linkages for the region. Likewise, the railroad served as a backbone for the development of Gordonsville—while trains no longer stop in Town, the rail lines traversing the Town serve both passenger and freight trains travelling through the region. The one-square-mile size of the Town is conducive to walking—while many streets have sidewalks to facilitate this mode of transportation, still others are in need of sidewalks to better link the various commercial and residential uses within the Town. This plan section provides information about transportation in the Town today, as well as issues and solutions for the future.



Figure 1. South Main Street, Gordonsville, early 1900's (photo archives).

Airport

A municipal airport serves not only to provide an alternate means of transportation, but can also act as a catalyst for economic development in the region.



Figure 2. Gordonsville Airport (photo courtesy of Jeff Poole, Orange County Review).

The [Gordonsville Municipal Airport](#) (GVE/KGVE) is the second-oldest continuously operating airport in the United States and is located approximately 2 miles north of Town on Route 15. The elevation of the airport is approximately 454' above sea level. It has a 2,300' long x 40' wide runway. A rotating beacon is located at the airport for air traffic directional purposes, and plane tie downs, storage and restrooms are available for the flying public.

In May 2008, Town Council took action to accept an [Airport Layout Plan](#) (ALP) for the Gordonsville airport. This plan was approved by the Virginia Department of Aviation in 2009 and provides for several improvements at the airport, including the construction of a tie-down area, t-hangars, taxi lanes for aircraft, vehicle parking, flight school, fuel tank, runway improvements and obstruction removal (see Appendices for a plan copy). In 2013, an Automated Weather Observation Station (AWOS) was installed at the airport, which reports altimeter and visibility; wind speed, gust and direction; cloud

height, and sky condition to pilots in the area. In 2014, a full standard license was issued for the airport. Funding for airport upgrades is available through the Virginia Department of Aviation.

Pedestrian Travel Network

Sidewalks have been and continue to be a vital means for pedestrian transportation within the Town. The first sidewalks in Gordonsville were constructed in the 19th century when boards were placed length-wise on walkways along the streets. Subsequently, bricks from a local brick yard were used to create sidewalks along Main Street; on side streets, cinders were used. In 1903, the



Town hired a firm from Richmond to build the first concrete sidewalks. These extended the entire length of Main Street on the east side, and on the west side of the street they extended as far as the Catholic Church (presently the Gordonsville Library).¹

Today, sidewalks in Town are of concrete construction. New walks are added yearly, mainly in the residential areas of the Town, continuously improving the walkability of the Town. In 2013, a sidewalk extension was completed along East Street from Baker Street to Ashlawn Court, providing improved pedestrian access from southeast Gordonsville to other areas of Town. Plans call for sidewalks to be built along West Gordon Avenue from its intersection with High Street to the corporate limits; along Martinsburg Avenue from High Street to the southern corporate limits along Route 15; and along Stonewall Avenue. The Town maintains sidewalks, and curbs and gutters are maintained by VDOT.



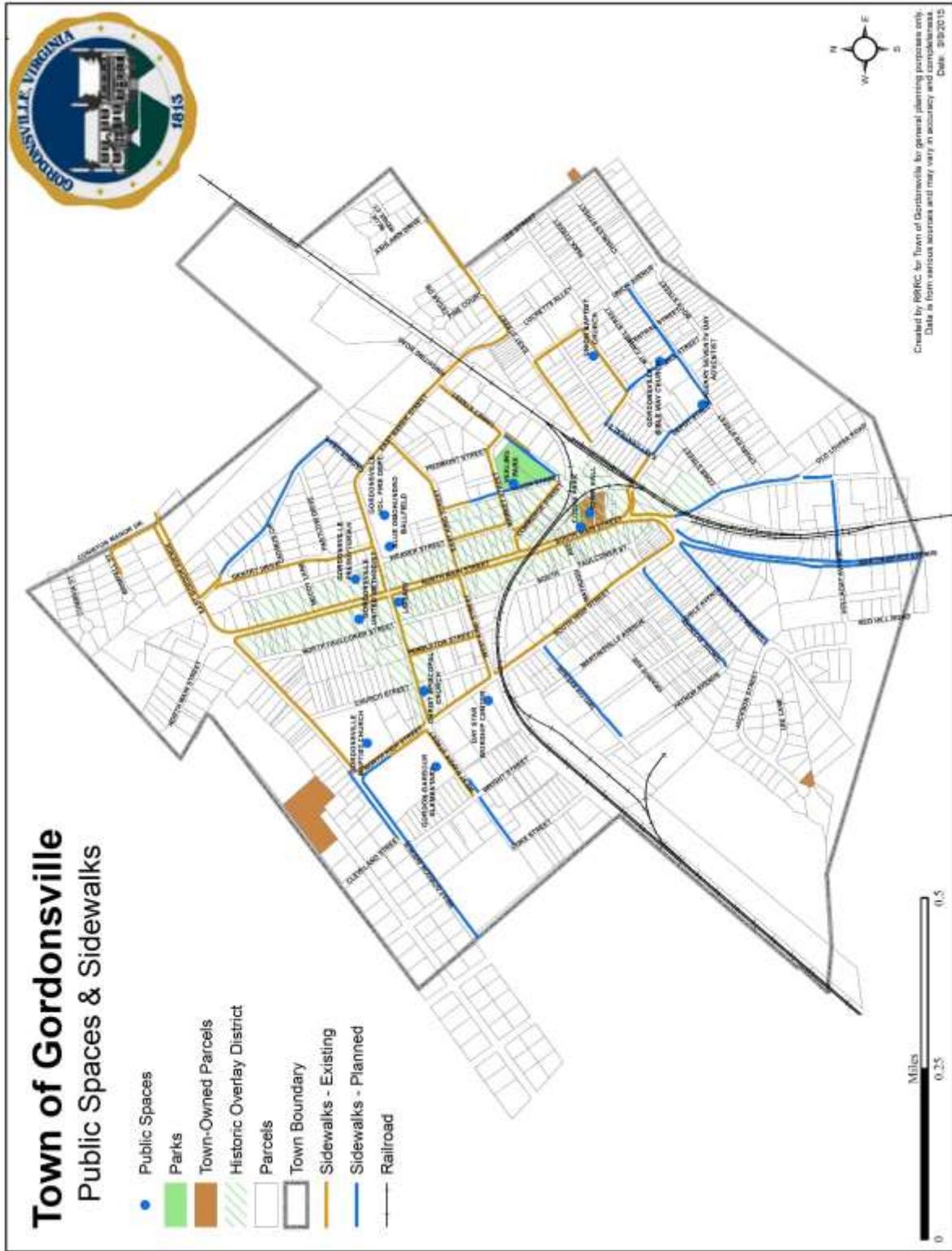
Figure 3. Town Crew works to construct the East Street sidewalk (staff photo, 2013).

The following sidewalk extensions should also be considered:

- Depot Street – from East Central Street to Charles Street
- Allen Street – from Linney Street to King Street
- Linney Street – from Commerce Street to Market Street
- South Main Street – from Martinsburg Avenue to Holladay Avenue
- East Central Street – from Depot Street to Mill Street
- Taylor Avenue – from High Street to end
- Grove Avenue – from Paynor Street to High Street
- West Baker Street – from Duke Street to Wright Street
- Holladay Avenue – from Martinsburg Avenue to South Main Street
- Charles Street – from Depot Street to Union Avenue
- Mill Street – from Charles Street to Cobb Street
- Cadmus Drive – from Gentry Drive to East Baker Street
- North Faulconer Street – from West Baker Street to West Gordon Avenue
- Church Street – from West Baker Street to West Gordon Avenue
- Martinsburg Avenue - From South Main to South Corporate Limit
- Stonewall Avenue - From High Street to Jackson Street
- West Gordon Avenue - From High Street to West Corporate Limit (South side of road)
- West Gordon Avenue - From High Street to Cleveland Street (North side of road)
- High Street - From Elementary School to Gordon Avenue

Whether these may be constructed depends on the availability of funding, proper street width and right of way. The map on the next page shows the location of suggested sidewalk extensions:

¹ From the records of former Town resident Vivian Davenport.
Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas





Public Transportation

Gordonsville residents who are unable to drive or who choose to use alternate modes of transportation for getting around have both fixed-route and demand-response public transportation options available to them.

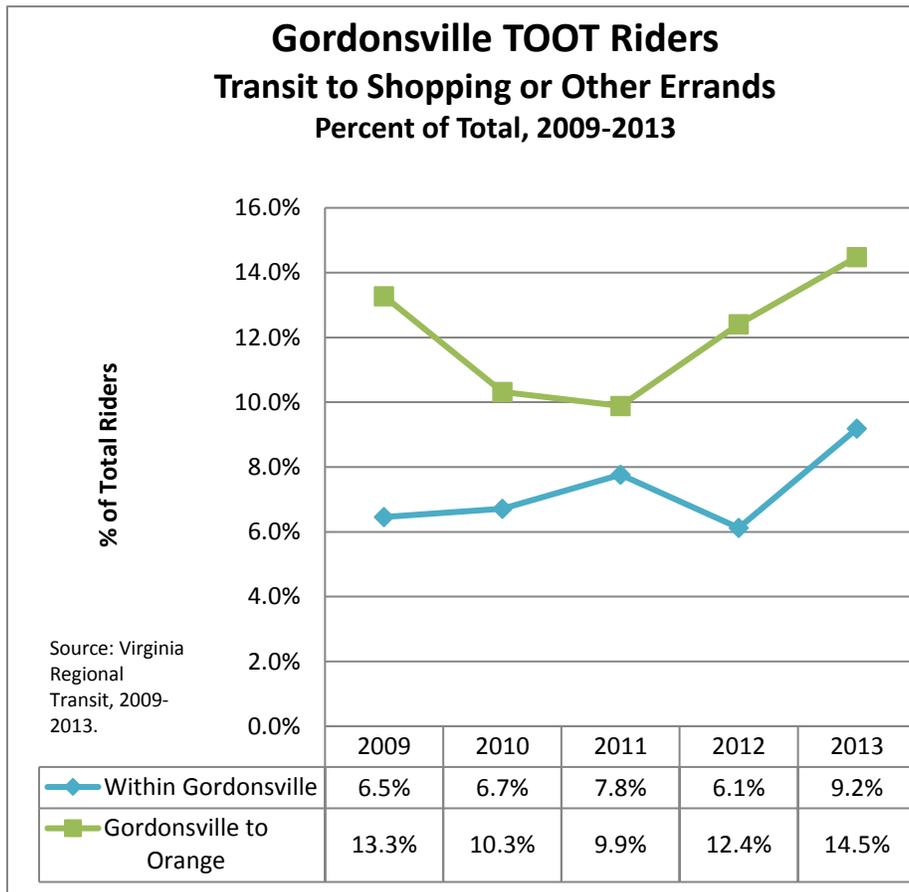
Fixed-Route

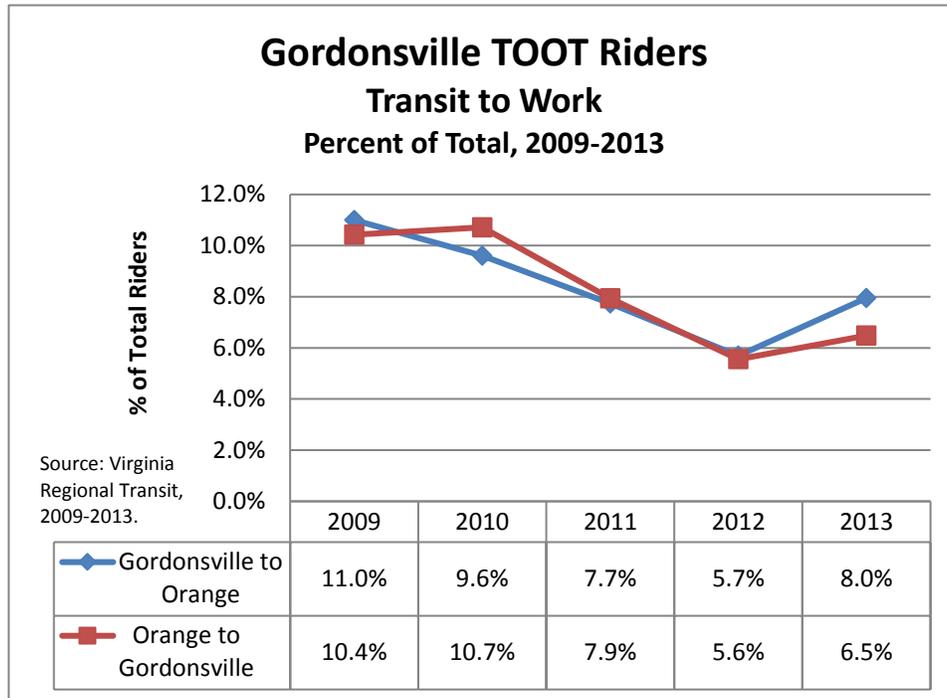
Town of Orange Transit (TOOT), operated by [Virginia Regional Transit](#), provides fixed-route public transportation between the Towns of Gordonsville and Orange during the week and on a limited basis on Saturdays. Stops in Gordonsville include Food Lion, Town Hall, Gordonsville Pharmacy, Meadow Run Apartments, East Gate Apartments, and Union Baptist Church.



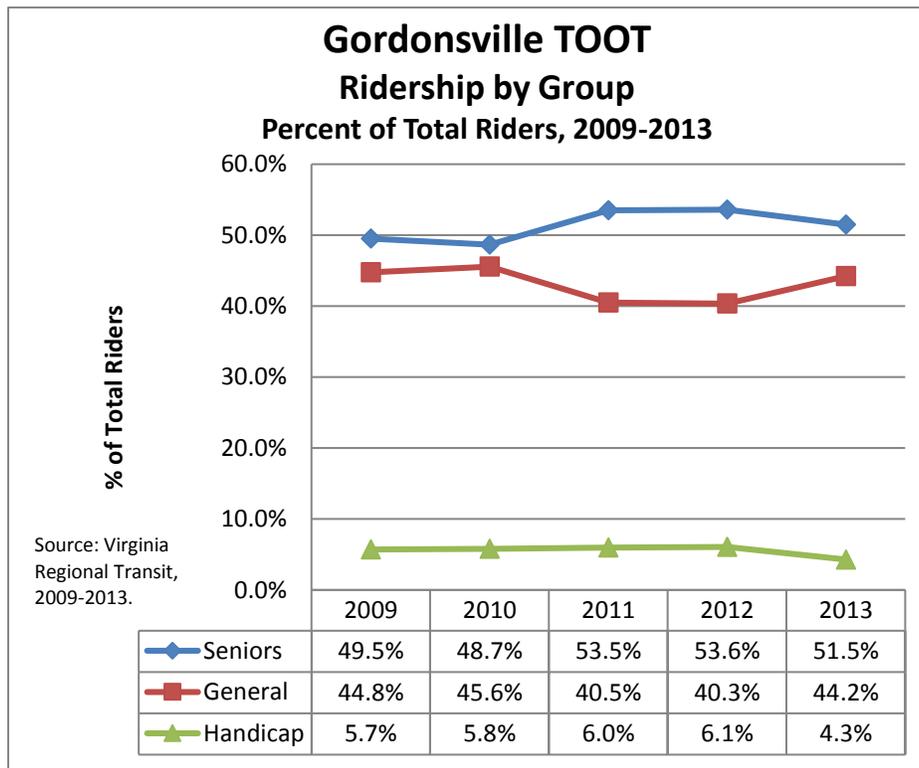
Figure 4. The TOOT bus makes a stop in front of Town Hall (staff photo, 2013).

The charts below illustrate usage of TOOT from 2009-2013:





The percent of TOOT riders using the service to travel to work between Gordonsville and Orange decreased from 2009 to 2013, while the percent of TOOT riders using the service for shopping or other errands saw an overall increase during that time. The following chart illustrates the demographic of TOOT users during the 2009-2013 timeframe:





Seniors consistently made up nearly half of TOOT ridership in Gordonsville from 2009-2013, while handicap riders steadily represented approximately 6% during this same time frame, with a dip to 4.3% in 2013. General ridership remained fairly constant between 40-45% from 2009 to 2013.

At one time, passenger bus service was available to Town residents through Greyhound Lines. While this and other bus service providers pass through Town, there is no longer a bus stop within the Town.

Demand Response

By nature of living in the Rappahannock-Rapidan region, Gordonsville residents have several options for demand-response transportation (curb-to-curb transportation reserved in advance) through the [Foothills Area Mobility System \(FAMS\)](#). A project of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission, FAMS is a regional partnership between the Commission and the Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board and Area on Aging that was created to provide and coordinate alternative transportation options for residents in the Rappahannock Rapidan Region. Through this initiative, "[One-Call Transportation Center](#)" and the Volunteer Transportation Network were created as resources for providing alternative means of transportation to citizens in the region.

Taxi service is available locally through an individual provider whose office is located within the Town; many other taxi service providers are located in Charlottesville.

Rail

Gordonsville's presence as a crossroads in the region was also true for rail transportation; the downtown area that exists today was built around the function of the [railroad](#). At one time the Town was the western terminus for rail traffic in Virginia. At the height of the presence of the railroad, a passenger depot would provide a respite for travelers on their way through the region, and a freight depot allowed for the delivery and shipment of goods and materials for the local mills and other businesses within the region. In the 1880's, the economic prosperity of the Town was curtailed when the Orange and Alexandria railroad (then known as the Virginia Midland railroad) constructed a rail line to the west of Town that provided a shorter route to Charlottesville for rail traffic from the north, pulling trade away from Gordonsville. Despite this decrease in rail through the Town, it continued to serve as an important stop for both passenger and freight rail until the mid-20th Century.²

In the late 19th century, women from the Town would bring platters of food, including the Town's now-famous fried chicken, to the passengers on trains stopped in Town, an activity that occurred regularly until passenger trains increasingly included dining cars in the early 20th century.

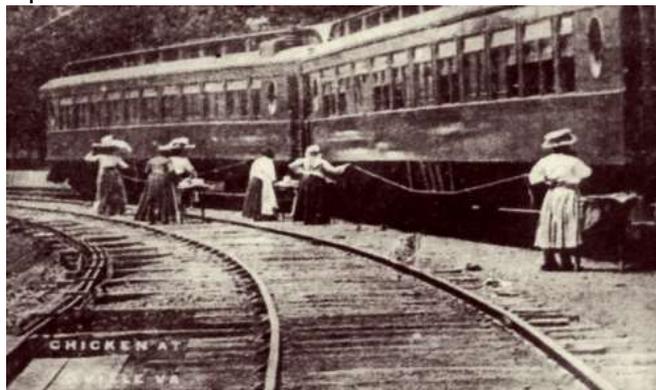


Figure 5. Gordonsville ladies prepare to serve food to rail passengers (photo archives).

² www.piedmontsub.com/Gville.shtml; May 23, 2014.



Figure 6. The freight depot today (staff photo, 2013).

Passenger trains stopped in Gordonsville until the late 1960's, and in the late 1970's, the passenger depot was torn down.³ The freight depot still stands today (shown at left), but was moved away from the railroad tracks to its current location in 2004. Federal enhancement funds have been awarded for the renovation of the freight depot, which is expected to begin in 2015.

Today, the Town has four highway-grade railroad crossings across two tracks within a one-mile distance. A fifth crossing, at Holladay Avenue, was closed in 2000 at the request of CSX and upon review by VDOT. According to VDOT, closure of this crossing would prevent motorists from traveling through on Holladay

Avenue and utilizing an intersection with limited sight distance on Route 15.

The Town's average daily train traffic consists of two daytime Buckingham Branch Railroad (BBRR) freight trains, five or more CSX-branded empty coal trains transiting around-the-clock to West Virginia, which pass along the Town's Main Street commercial district, and the Amtrak *Cardinal* line, which crosses the Baker Street crossing three times a week. Although there is no longer a rail stop in Gordonsville, the tight horseshoe-shaped rail bed requires trains to slow down as they travel through town. As of September 1, 2012, the Town's railroad crossings all have the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)-required safety equipment.⁴ In 2012, the Gordonsville Town Council took action to implement a railroad quiet zone such that trains passing through town may not blow their whistles between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. unless there is something on or near the tracks that poses a threat to rail traffic.



Figure 7. Railroad crossing at Depot Street (staff photo, 2013).

Streets

The maintenance of streets in Town is shared between the Town's Public Works Department and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Currently, the Town maintains less than one mile of streets. These streets are in residential neighborhoods and for the most part are not heavily traveled. The following streets are maintained by the Town:

Union Avenue
Weaver Street (From E King Street to dead end)
McCoy Lane
Lucketts Alley
E. Central Street
Park Street
Stonewall Avenue (From Holladay to end)
Faulconer Street (From West Baker to end)

³ www.piedmontsub.com/Gville.shtml; March 17, 2014.

⁴ "A Railroad Quiet Zone Feasibility Study – Town of Gordonsville, Virginia". Christopher F. Colby, June 18, 2012.



Lee Street (southeast)
Knighting Road
Cobb Street (From Union Avenue to Lee Street)
Bock Street

The remaining streets in Town are maintained by the VDOT and include both primary and secondary routes.

One of the signature transportation features in Town is the Gordonsville traffic circle where U.S. Route 15, U.S. Route 33 and Virginia Route 231 converge. This modern-day crossroads is what most travelers know as “Gordonsville”. Until the recent promotion and construction of roundabouts throughout the Commonwealth, the Gordonsville traffic circle was one of a few that existed in Virginia. Generally, the traffic circle efficiently manages traffic that passes through Town; however, the design of the circle is not that of a true roundabout in that motorists traveling east along West Gordon Avenue must stop before proceeding through the circle. During peak levels of traffic, this has caused traffic to back up along West Gordon Avenue from the circle to the intersection of Church Street and beyond. VDOT has indicated its desire to redesign the circle so that it functions as a true roundabout and minimizes the traffic back-up along West Gordon Avenue.



Figure 8. The Gordonsville Traffic Circle (image from Google Earth, 2013).

Trends in Traffic

In August 2012, VDOT prepared a traffic data summary for the Town; data from recent traffic counts for certain streets are shown in the table below.

Traffic and Road Characteristics for the Town of Gordonsville

Road	Road Type	Road Classification	Number of Accesses*	Speed Limit	2012		2040		ADT Percent Change 2012-2040
					ADT	LOS	ADT	LOS	
Route 15 – Main Street	R2L	MA	10-14/mi	35	8,858	C	12,157	E	37.2%
Route 231 – West Gordon Avenue	R2L	RMC	10-14/mi	35	986	A	1,308	B	32.7%
Route 33 - Spotswood Trail	R2L	RMA	10-14/mi	45	6,670	E	9,317	E	39.7%
Route 643 - East Street	R2L	RMC	9-9/mi	45	367	A	420	A	14.4%

*The number of access points is a "typical" number and may not be the actual number for a given segment of roadway.

ADT = average daily traffic

R2L = rural 2-lane

LOS = level of service (indicator of roadway efficiency)

RMA = rural minor arterial

MA = minor arterial

RMC = rural minor collector

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, 2012



Figure 9. Signage at the Gordonsville Traffic Circle (staff photo, 2014).

US Routes 15 and 33, and Virginia Route 231, are the principle roadways that carry traffic through the Town. Secondary Route 643, which begins as East Street in the Town, often serves as an alternate route for local traffic to access Route 15 or other roadways within Orange County. While these roads are considered to be rural 2-lane roadways, they each have different classifications that are based on the amount of traffic each is designed to carry. US Route 15 is considered to be a minor arterial (MA) that carries higher levels of traffic within the region. US Route 33 is considered a rural minor arterial (RMA) that links population centers within the region. Virginia Route 231 and Secondary Route 643 are rural minor collector (RMC) streets that serve to “collect” local traffic for conveyance onto other larger roads (arterials).

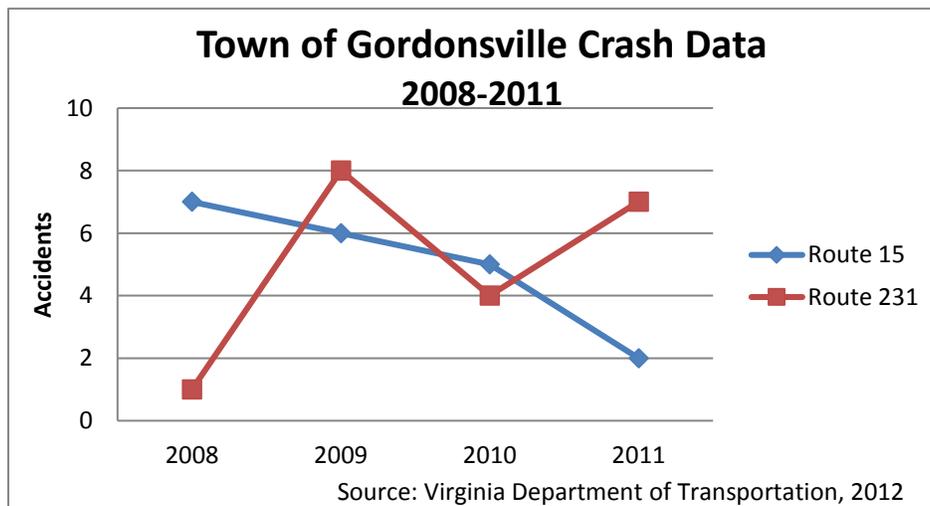
Streets are “graded” according to their ability to carry designated levels of traffic with the A-F scale much like students are graded on their ability to master learning. A street that is graded as “A” is adequately carrying a level of traffic for which it is designed, while a street that has a grade of “F” is failing in that traffic volumes are exceeding road design and traffic is moving inefficiently. According to the information gathered by VDOT for the streets shown in the table above, Route 231 and East Street are graded at “A” in 2012, while US Route 15 is graded at “C” and US Route 33 is graded at “E”.

Traffic projections for 2040 show a degradation of street efficiency for Route 15 and Route 231, while Route 33 and Route 643 remain the same despite projected increases in traffic levels. Failing streets may result in the need for lane improvements or designating alternate routes of traffic to improve the efficiency of traffic moving through the Town.

Several planning initiatives have been undertaken in recent years to identify necessary street improvements within the Town. These are reviewed in the “Transportation Planning” sub-heading of this plan section.

Traffic Accidents

With regard to traffic accidents within the Town, a total of 55 crashes were reported from 2008-2011. Routes 231 and 15 were the only two streets with significant numbers of crashes (20 each) during that time frame. The chart below illustrates how the number of crashes on these two streets changed from 2008 to 2011.





While accidents along Route 15 decreased from 2008-2011, crashes along Route 231 increased significantly. The table below provides a breakdown of the types of accidents that occurred on these two streets.

Town of Gordonsville Crash Data for Routes 231 and 15, 2008-2011

Route Name	Year	Accident Type							Total Accidents
		Rear End	Angle	Sideswipe	Fixed Object	Non-collision	Head-on	other	
Route 231	2008	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	2009	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	8
	2010	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
	2011	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	7
	Total	8	8	1	3	0	0	0	20
Route 15	2008	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	7
	2009	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	6
	2010	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	5
	2011	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total	5	2	5	6	0	2	0	20

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, 2012

On Route 231, “rear-end” and “angle” crash types were the most prevalent, with each having 8 incidents. On Route 15, “rear-end”, “sideswipe” and “fixed object” crashes were the most common. For both streets, accident locations are random and do not necessarily suggest the need for road improvements.

Truck Traffic

Truck traffic has an imposing presence on the main thoroughfares through town. With Lee Industrial Park, MPS and Klöckner Intertrans located less than 9 miles north of the Town on Route 15, and with Interstate 64 and the Walmart Distribution Center at Zion Crossroads located just 11 miles south of the Town on Route 15, approximately 15% of the traffic passing through town each day is truck traffic.



Figure 10. One of many trucks still traveling on Main Street, despite current restrictions (staff photo, 2014).

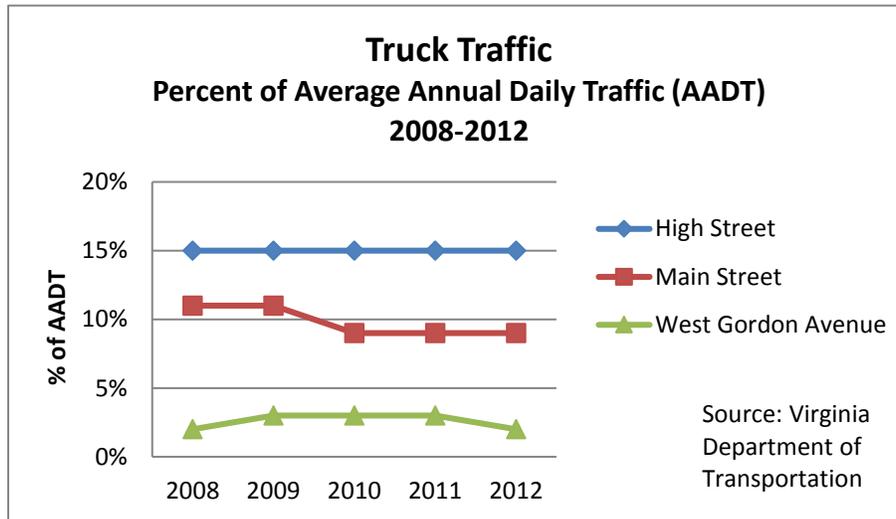
Trucks travelling through downtown on Main Street made pedestrian access to businesses unsafe and hampered revitalization efforts. In 2001, the [Gordonsville Main Street Truck Traffic Study](#) prepared by the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission documented the issues related to truck traffic on Main Street and suggested short- and long-term solutions to reduce their impact, one of which was to consider restricting truck traffic from Main Street.⁵ In December 2001, Town Council requested that VDOT designate High Street as a Truck Route, and in January 2002, VDOT

⁵ “Gordonsville Main Street Truck Traffic Study”, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission, April 2001.



complied, placing a through-truck and tractor truck semi-trailer restriction on Main Street and designating High Street as the Truck Route through Town.

High Street, Main Street and West Gordon Avenue are the three streets on which most trucks travel as they go through Town. The chart below illustrates truck traffic as a percentage of Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on these streets from 2008-2012.



As expected, truck traffic on High Street has remained consistent at 15%, while truck traffic on Main Street decreased slightly from 11% to 9% during 2008-2012. Increased enforcement of the restriction of truck traffic on Main Street is likely the result of this slight decrease, and the number of trucks on Main Street is expected to continue to decrease over time as enforcement of the restriction continues. Levels of truck traffic on West Gordon Avenue, the link between High Street and the Gordonsville Traffic Circle, also remained fairly consistent at 2-3% from 2008-2012.

As the regional and local economy continue to improve, the transport of freight through the Town will continue and likely increase. Planning initiatives undertaken by the Town to identify short- and long-term solutions to the issue of truck traffic are reviewed in the “Transportation Planning” sub-heading of this plan section.

Transportation Planning

While the number of people in the Town has changed little in the past 40 years, the volume of traffic through Town has increased as surrounding areas continue to develop and as economic development and tourism efforts successfully bring people to and through the Town. The increase in traffic levels and their impact on the Town has prompted the development of numerous transportation studies and plans over the years; additionally, acknowledgement of the keen relationship between transportation and land use has transformed transportation planning at all levels.

Summarized below are national, state, regional and local transportation initiatives that have provided and continue to provide guidance on transportation planning in the Town as well as short- and long-term improvements needed to ensure the efficiency and the safety of the transportation network in and around the Town.



National Initiatives

Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground is a 180-mile long historically rich and scenic corridor that stretches generally along U.S. Route 15 from Gettysburg, PA to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Albemarle County. Touted as an area of the Country "with more history than any other region of the nation"⁶, the JTHG corridor was created to educate visitors about its significance to the history of America and to enhance the heritage tourism efforts of towns and communities along the way. The Town of Gordonsville is located at the southern end of the JTHG corridor and embraced its creation by adopting resolutions in support of both the National Heritage Area and the National Scenic Byway in 2006.



In 2008, President Bush signed into law the legislation that designated the area encompassed by the Journey as a [National Heritage Area](#). In October 2009, the corridor was designated as a [National Scenic Byway](#) by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. These designations signify the national importance of this corridor in the history of the United States and enable communities within the corridor to undertake efforts to enhance and protect their place in history.

By nature of designation as a National Scenic Byway, the JTHG corridor and the communities through which it passes can enjoy the benefits of enhanced marketing efforts and increased opportunities for funding for heritage tourism and other local preservation efforts. As noted in the [press release](#) announcing the National Scenic Byway designation, the mission of the National Scenic Byways Program is: "to provide resources to the byway community in creating a unique travel experience and enhanced local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated byways."⁷

The management plan developed for the 180-mile corridor sets forth a [transportation planning goal](#) to "Promote the creation and maintenance of transportation systems that employ context sensitive design and protect efficient, safe, and enjoyable travel through the corridor for all modes and types of users while maintaining the character defining features of the corridor."⁸ Towards this end, the [JTHG corridor management plan](#) provides recommendations for local and regional transportation planning efforts as follows:

- Context Sensitive Design Solutions
- Understanding the Byway as part of a Comprehensive Travel Network
- Best Practices Along the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway
- Transportation Design and Access Management Solutions
- Streetscaping, Screening and Buffering Recommendations
- Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trail Enhancements⁹

⁶ Journey Through Hallowed Ground; www.hallowedground.org; May 21, 2012; internet.

⁷ Press release; Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway Designation, October 16, 2009.

⁸ <http://www.hallowedground.org/Partner-Resources/National-Scenic-Byway/Transportation-Planning>; March 20, 2014.

⁹ <http://www.hallowedground.org/Partner-Resources/National-Scenic-Byway/Transportation-Planning>; March 20, 2014.



Virginia Initiatives

In Virginia, the arrival of the 21st century ushered in a sea-change in philosophy and regulation regarding the relationship between transportation and land use. Limited public funds and increasing demand for services prompted the state to create [VTrans2035](#), a statewide multimodal transportation policy plan that sets forth policies and goals for the future of all modes of transportation in Virginia (the update of this plan in February 2014 introduces a framework for performance-based planning of transportation improvements). Subsequently, the state developed the Virginia Surface Transportation Plan, which outlines strategies for implementing the policies of VTrans2035.

Actions taken by the Virginia General Assembly from 2006 through 2011 further solidified the state's commitment to coordinating land use and transportation. Chapter 527 of the 2006 Acts of Assembly directed the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop requirements for improved coordination between land use and transportation. As a result, [traffic impact analysis](#), [secondary street acceptance](#) and [access management](#) requirements were developed for use in state and local review of site development plans. To illustrate how these requirements may be implemented through development design, VDOT developed "[Transportation Efficient Land Use and Design](#)" guidelines that feature compact and walkable development patterns, mixed land uses, neighborhood centers and accessible open space.

Regional Initiatives

2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan

In 2011, the Virginia Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC – PD-9) and Parsons Group, prepared a [Regional Long Range Transportation Plan](#) for the PD-9 region. One of 20 prepared across the state at that time, the development of this plan was part of the state's initiative to implement VTrans 2035, and to implement the state's initiative to develop regional transportation plans for rural areas similar to those in place for the metropolitan and small urban areas of Virginia.

This plan, which identifies multi-modal transportation needs in each locality within the PD-9 region, will be used by localities and VDOT when initiating or evaluating specific transportation project requests. The project requests listed in the plan will help to inform the statewide transportation planning process with regard to transportation needs in the PD-9 region.

For the Town of Gordonsville, the following road segments or intersections were identified in the Regional Long Range plan as having either a safety or operational deficiency (or both). The suggested corresponding mitigating improvement, whether short-, medium- or long-term, is also listed for each:

Safety deficiencies:

- *US 15/US 33/High St. (southern intersection of High Street)*
Mid-term: add crosswalks and improve turning radii on all approaches; Long-term: straighten/realign curves and modify traffic patterns.
- *VA 231/High St. (northern intersection of High Street)*
Short-term: install warning signage;
Mid-term: improve turning radius for northbound approach;



Long-term: monitor need for signalization.

- VA 231 (Blue Ridge Tnpk. /Gordon Ave.)/US 15 Bus. (Main St.) (Traffic Circle)
No recommendation based on analysis--continue to monitor for potential deficiencies.

Operational deficiencies:

- US 15 (Gordonsville Bypass/Truck Route) from US 15 N. of Town of Gordonsville to US 15/33 S. of Town of Gordonsville
Long-term: construct new four-lane roadway.
- US 33 from Greene Co. Line to US 15 in Gordonsville
Long-term: reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- US 15 from US 33/VA 231 to Louisa Co. Line
Long-term: widen to four lanes with median.
- VA 231 from Louisa Co. Line to US 33
Long-term: widen to four lanes with median.
- US 15 from US 33/231 to Northern Boundary of the Town of Gordonsville
Long-term: widen to four lanes with median.

At the October 2011 Council meeting, Council reviewed the projects listed for the Town of Gordonsville in the 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan and in November 2011 designated the following as the top three Gordonsville projects to be presented to VDOT for listing in the FY13-18 Six Year Improvement Plan:

Short-term

1. High Street (north) intersection with Gordon Avenue
2. High Street (south) intersection with Martinsburg Avenue

Long-term

Gordonsville Truck Route (Bypass)

In May 2014, Town Council reaffirmed their project preferences in this regard, with the understanding that the short-term intersection improvements for High Street would be consistent with the recommended construction of a roundabout at each end as set forth in the Gordonsville Intersection Improvement Study approved by Council in July 2013 (this study is further discussed under Local Initiatives below).

Local Initiatives

Gordonsville Main Street Truck Traffic Study

Despite the designation of High Street as an Alternate Truck Route through Town in 1985, tractor-trailers still used Main Street as a through-street. With the ever increasing level of commercial activity in the region, truck traffic was also increasing, hampering revitalization efforts of the Town's downtown commercial center and posing safety risks to downtown patrons and motorists. Specifically, the Town was denied Community Development Block Grant funding for downtown revitalization because the issue of truck traffic, the cause of deterioration on Main Street, had not been addressed.

At the request of the Town, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission studied the issue of truck traffic on Main Street and developed the [Main Street Truck Traffic Study](#), which



recommended the following list of both short- and long-term strategies for mitigating the impact of truck traffic on Main Street:

- Request VDOT to prepare a “Truck Restriction Analysis” to update traffic data for the Town and to examine the potential for intersection improvements at both the northern and southern intersections of High Street;
- Examine the feasibility of converting existing crosswalks along Main and High Streets to raised crosswalks;
- Engage the community through public meetings to get citizen input on needed improvements along Main Street and High Street;
- Consider requesting that VDOT restrict Main Street from tractor-trailer traffic;
- Continue to focus on streetscape enhancement to include “landscaping, lighting, bicycle and pedestrian access, parking, signage and aesthetics throughout the Town.”¹⁰
- Rekindle bypass planning process with Orange County and other surrounding localities;
- Make changes to land use, zoning and other ordinances as needed to protect a designated bypass route while taking steps to protect the Town’s viability as a destination for commercial and tourism activity.

Gordonsville Bypass Plan



Figure 11. One of many trucks travelling through Town on a daily basis prepares to turn North on to High Street (staff photo, 2013).

The development of a plan for a bypass route for the Town was a direct result of the impact of truck traffic on both Main and High Streets in Gordonsville. In April 1997, the Town requested VDOT to engage in alternate route planning for the Town. In the fall of 1998, Orange County created a Gordonsville Bypass Committee to develop a bypass plan through the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission’s Rural Transportation Planning Program. The plan development that ensued was a multi-year, coordinated effort among the Town and Orange, Albemarle and Louisa counties. The conceptual route that resulted from this collaboration proposed to connect U.S. Routes 15/33 south of Gordonsville eastward to U.S. Route 15 north of Town. At the request of Orange County, the proposed bypass project was

added to the VDOT Six Year Improvement Plan in the mid-2000’s and funding was made available by the state for preliminary engineering of the proposed route.

Due to funding constraints, however, the project was not pursued, and in September 2013, Town Council requested that the Gordonsville Bypass be replaced in the FY14-19 Six Year Improvement Plan with intersection improvements designed for High Street (described in “Gordonsville Intersection Improvements Study” below).

Gordonsville Intersections Improvement Study (High Street Intersection Plan)

At the request of the Town of Gordonsville, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in conjunction with its on-call transportation consultant, developed a planning study of the northern and southern intersections of High Street in 2013. This study examined issues and concerns for each intersection and then outlined alternative improvements for addressing those issues and

¹⁰ “Main Street Truck Traffic Study”, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission, April 2001.



concerns. The project was funded through VDOT's On-call Consulting Program at no direct cost to the town. HNTB from Arlington, Virginia, was the consultant that worked with VDOT on this project.

To assist with the development of the planning study, Town Council appointed a Steering Committee comprised of local citizens and stakeholders, most of whom owned property or represented a group that owned property at either end of High Street. Through a series of meetings, the committee provided thoughtful insight as to the issues and concerns surrounding the northern and southern intersections of High Street. The consultant used this information, along with technical data for both intersections (traffic counts, accident reports, etc.) to formulate intersection designs that could be used to improve their safety and efficiency.



Figure 12. Mayor Coiner, Councilmember Colby, Planning Commissioner Bradley and Steering Committee members listen to consultant Rob Brander of HNTB during the field visit (staff photo, 2013).

In March 2013, the consultant conducted a field visit where members of the Steering Committee, members of Council, Town staff and other interested parties met at both ends of High Street to view first-hand the traffic and safety issues identified for each intersection and to review the draft conceptual designs for intersection improvements.

The [final report](#) for the [High Street Intersection study](#) was presented to Council on June 17, 2013, and on July 15, 2013, Council adopted the study, specifically recommending Alternative 1 (125' diameter roundabout) for both the northern and southern intersections of High Street. The photos on the next pages show northern and southern High Street today and the conceptual improvements as recommended by Council:¹¹

¹¹ "Gordonsville Intersections Improvement Study", Virginia Department of Transportation and HNTB Corporation, July 2013.



North High Street in 2013:



Proposed intersection improvements:





South High Street in 2013:



Proposed intersection improvements:





In September 2013, Town Council requested that Orange County include the High Street intersection improvements in the update of their FY2014-2019 Six Year Improvement Plan to be developed in the spring of 2014 so that funding may be sought for preliminary engineering and design and, ultimately, construction of the improvements. As with the planning phase of the project, a stakeholders group will be appointed to oversee the design of the improvements when that stage of the project is reached.

Main Street Streetscape Plan

In 1998, Gordonsville developed a Downtown Revitalization Master Plan that was funded with a grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. As noted above, one of the recommendations of the Gordonsville Main Street Truck Traffic Study was to continue to focus on streetscape enhancements of Main Street. In 2005, the Town applied for funding from the VDOT Transportation Enhancement Program to implement many of the improvements and revitalization efforts recommended in the 1998 master plan. Virtually all merchants in the downtown area submitted letters expressing wholehearted support for the project. In 2006, 2010, 2011 and 2012, the Town was awarded enhancement funds that would fully fund the project.



Figure 13. Downtown Main Street (staff photo, 2017).

The purpose of the [Main Street Streetscape project](#) is to achieve improved pedestrian transportation through enhanced design. Through the use of sidewalk improvements, traffic calming measures, landscaping and signage, the project will improve the pedestrian scale of the downtown business district, making it safer and more enjoyable for everyone who comes downtown.

The project area encompasses Main Street between West King Street and High Street, and is located within the Town of Gordonsville Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Enhancements along the corridor include replacement of deteriorating sidewalks, curb and guttering; rehabilitation of drainage structures; reduction of the street crown; 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. Also included is the extension of sidewalk to create a link between the historic downtown business district and the historic Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum.

Project construction began in March 2015 and was completed in 2016. Below is a conceptual plan showing the proposed improvements for the streetscape project:



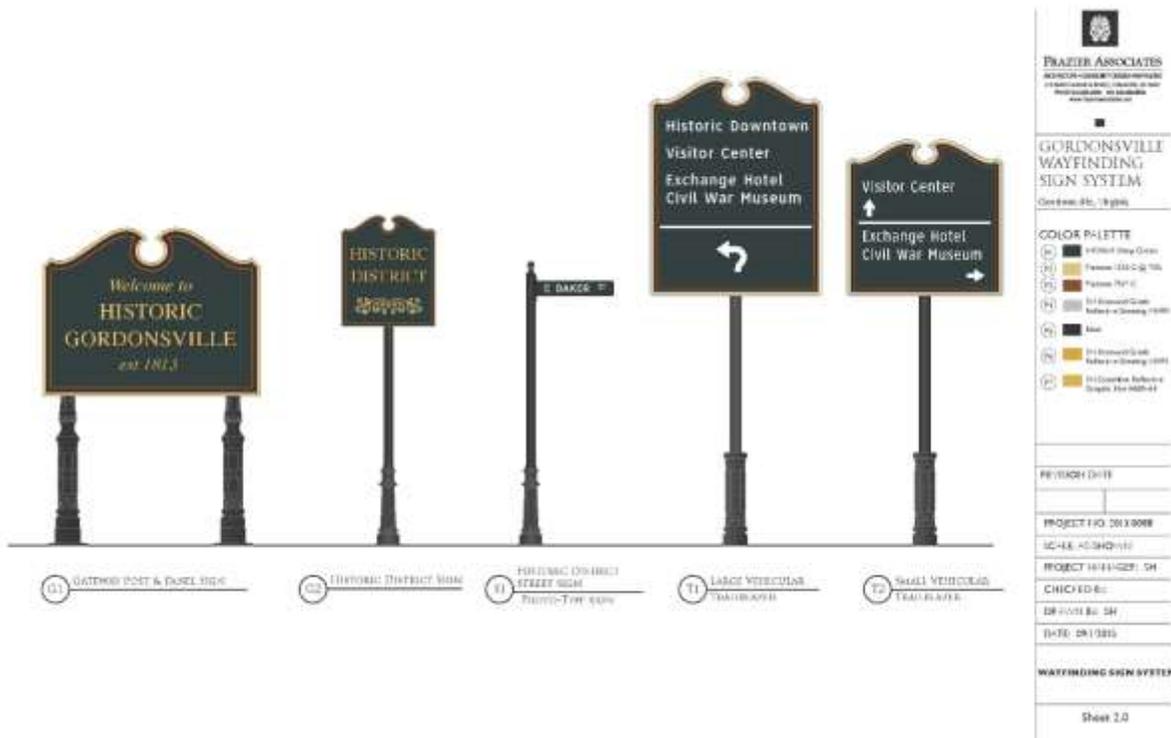


Wayfinding Signage Project



As noted previously, most people traveling through Gordonsville have a perception that the traffic circle located at the northern end of Main Street is all there is to the town. Signage is needed to bring them down Main Street further into the town so that they may enjoy the historic downtown and all it has to offer. Toward this end, the Town hired a consultant for the development of a wayfinding signage program in 2014. The sign program developed by the consultant and approved by VDOT (see sign examples below) will complement signage developed as part of the streetscape project and will include both directional and information signs that are recognizable as a “brand” for the town.

Figure 14. This sign welcomes motorists traveling into Town on Route 15 from Orange (staff photo, 2011).

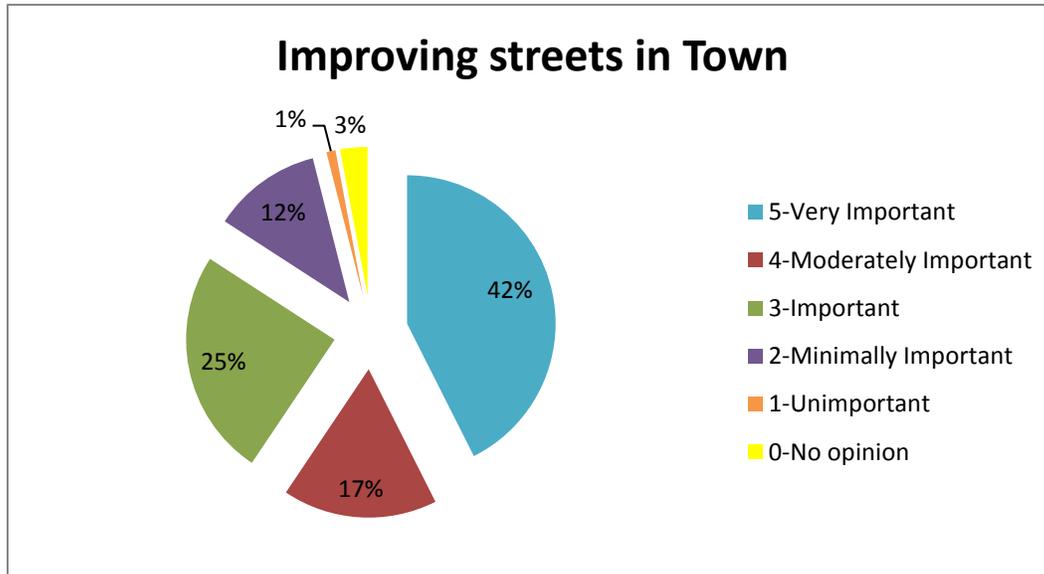




Community Meeting and Survey Responses

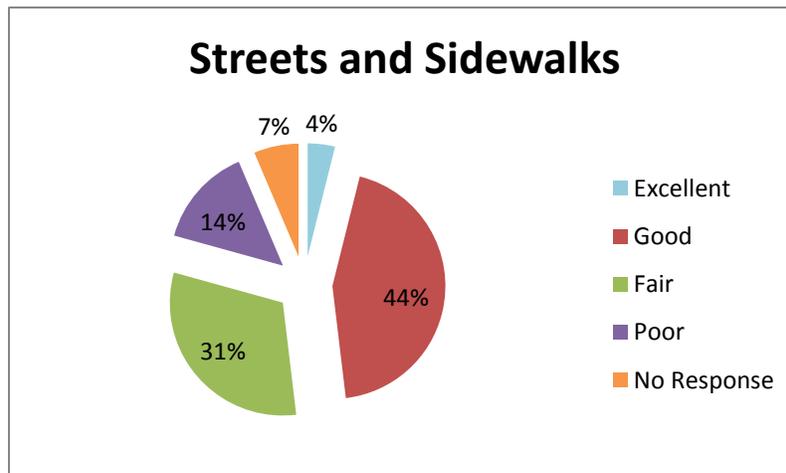
Transportation was a topic of importance for Gordonsville residents at the community meetings and in the community survey conducted in the fall of 2011.

In the community survey, residents were asked to rate the issue of improving streets in the Town. Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated that this issue was important, moderately important or very important. More than 40% of the respondents indicated the improvement of streets in the Town is very important. The chart below illustrates the breakdown of responses:



Generally, survey respondents to the issue of improving Town streets noted there are places in Town where streets and sidewalks need improvement as there are many people who walk in Town for exercise, and the streets and sidewalks need to be safe. In addition, they noted that improving the streets (and sidewalks) in Town will encourage more people to walk, which is good for the community. Many of the respondents who indicated that this issue is minimally important or unimportant noted that they feel the streets in Town are in good shape.

Survey respondents were also asked to rate services provided by the Town. The chart below illustrates how respondents rated the Town's provision of streets and sidewalks:





Twenty-four percent of the respondents who rated this service said they would be willing to pay increased taxes to improve or expand streets and sidewalks. The tax increase some respondents indicated they would be willing to pay ranged from 1% to 10%.

During the community meetings, participants stated that one weakness of the town is that some areas of town are not pedestrian-friendly: sidewalks are lacking and more crosswalks are needed across major streets. Others stated that having passenger trains stop in town is an opportunity to be pursued. Still others stated that the truck traffic in town and the lack of a truck route around the town are threats to the community.

The following are tasks related to transportation that community meeting participants indicated the town should pursue:

- Bring TOOT (Town of Orange Transit) to Gordonsville on weekends; promote/expand usage of TOOT
- Better traffic signage in Town
- Develop truck route around Town to take trucks out of Town and away from sensitive areas such as the elementary school and the at-grade railroad crossing
- Improve the northern and southern intersections of High Street - maybe consider the development of a round-about at southern end of High Street
- Encourage TOOT link with Town of Charlottesville
- Airport runway is insufficient - extend to better accommodate general aviation
- Rebuild runway at the airport
- Work to develop multi-modal trails through Town and to connect to the region
- Work to improve sight-distance at key intersections in Town
- Need more sidewalks and wider streets in certain areas of Town
- Develop a sidewalk maintenance/construction plan

The tasks related to TOOT, developing a truck route, improving the intersections of High Street, and developing trails in Town were mentioned at two of the three community meetings held.



Transportation Goal

Create a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation network for the Town that reflects the character of the Town and meets the mobility needs for residents and visitors alike.

Objective A. Improve the Gordonsville Airport to become a full-service General Aviation Airport.	
A1.	<i>Establish a timeline for implementation of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP).</i>
A2.	<i>Continue to pursue funding from the Virginia Department of Aviation for ALP implementation.</i>
Objective B. Expand the Town's existing sidewalk network to ensure all neighborhoods are served.	
B1.	<i>Develop a sidewalk extension/construction plan for the Town.</i>
B2.	<i>Work with property owners to acquire right-of-way needed to construct sidewalks in accordance with the Town's plan.</i>
Objective C. Expand the provision of public transportation in the Town.	
C1.	<i>Work with Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) and the Foothills Area Mobility Service (FAMS) to explore the provision of fixed-route transportation to Charlottesville and Zion Crossroads.</i>
C2.	<i>Work with VRT to expand the TOOT route in Town to include stops along High Street.</i>
Objective D. Improve the efficiency of the transportation network in the Town.	
D1.	<i>Encourage VDOT to modify the existing traffic circle so that it operates as a true roundabout.</i>
D2.	<i>Work with CSX/Buckingham Branch Railroad and VDOT to reinstall an at-grade railroad crossing on Holladay Avenue to make the street a viable connection between South Main Street and Martinsburg Avenue.</i>
D3.	<i>Work with VDOT to extend Charles Street to South Main Street.</i>
Objective E. Improve the transportation network within the Town to efficiently and safely accommodate truck traffic traveling through the region.	
E1.	<i>Pursue the construction of roundabouts at the northern and southern intersections of High Street as recommended in the Gordonsville Intersections Improvements Study to better accommodate truck traffic at those intersections.</i>
E2.	<i>Continue enforcement efforts to reduce truck traffic on Main Street.</i>



E3.	<i>Work with VDOT to improve truck route signage within the town.</i>
E4.	<i>Work with Orange County, Louisa County and VDOT to resurrect prior planning efforts to develop a truck route around the town.</i>
Objective F. Ensure that transportation networks associated with new development within the Town are efficiently designed and provide multiple modes of transportation.	
F1.	<i>Modify the Town's Land Development Ordinance to incorporate in total or by reference the design guidelines established as part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground initiative, as well as the Virginia Department of Transportation's "Transportation Efficient Land Use and Design" guidelines.</i>
F2.	<i>Develop a wayfinding signage program that acts as a "brand" for the Town and serves to inform the traveling public of the shopping, dining and tourism opportunities in the historic downtown.</i>
Objective G. Make rail transportation a viable component of the Town's transportation network.	
G1.	<i>Work with the providers of rail transport within the region to re-establish a passenger rail stop in the Town.</i>
G2.	<i>Work with Historic Gordonsville to renovate the Freight Depot as an historic landmark and potential passenger rail station within the Town.</i>