



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.



Figure 1. Cooke Park in Downtown Gordonsville (photo courtesy of Jeff Poole).

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.

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 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.



Figure 2. Shops on Main Street (photo courtesy of Jeff Poole).



Project Area

The project area is Main Street between King Street and High Street in the Town of Gordonsville Historic District as shown on the map below.





Proposed Enhancements

The Town 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 included: 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 and retaining walls.

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.
\$ 896,000	3rd grant award
<u>\$ 595,000</u>	<u>4th grant award</u>
\$2,352,282	Total Grant Funds secured
<u>\$ 588,070</u>	<u>Town's 20% match</u>
\$2,940,352	TOTAL PROJECT COST

Proposed Timeline

Project construction took place from March 2015 to March 2016 and was generally divided into 3 phases as shown on the rendering below. Phases one and two of the project were constructed together, and timing of construction was such that the impact on downtown businesses was minimized.



Figure 3. Downtown Streetscape project, during and after construction (staff photos).



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, will draw patrons to the existing businesses and encourage the location of new business, and will provide visitors a pleasant experience when they come to Town.

Objective A. To promote the renovation of existing structures so as to maintain the local character and identity of the community.	
A1.	<i>Establish design standards and incorporate them into the town’s Land Development Ordinance to guide structure renovation.</i>
Objective B. To promote and support the use of ornamental plantings to beautify areas within the town, including gateways into town, and to encourage streetscape development along major thoroughfares through town.	
B1.	<i>Work with local garden clubs to develop and maintain attractive landscaping on publicly owned property within the Town.</i>
B2.	<i>Develop an overall streetscape and landscaping plan for each of the gateways into town, including the traffic circle.</i>
B3.	<i>Seek grant funding, specifically federal enhancement funds, to improve the gateways to town.</i>



B4.	Seek private funding for beautification projects.
Objective C. Encourage new or infill development to be designed and constructed so as to be compatible with the design, mass and scale of structures found within the same neighborhood and zoning district.	
C1.	Inventory the characteristics of each neighborhood within the town and develop design guidelines reflective of these characteristics for incorporation into the town's Land Development Ordinance.
Objective D. Keep vacant properties in Town from becoming overgrown and unsightly.	
D1.	Work with the owners of vacant properties in Town to ensure property maintenance and upkeep, specifically with regard to inoperative vehicles.
D2.	Implement an "adopt a street or area" project.
Objective E. Maintain/establish the tree canopy in Town.	
E1.	Develop a tree-replacement program for the Town (using street trees, not ornamental trees).
Objective F. Encourage the continuing beautification of the downtown business area.	
F1.	Work with downtown business owners to make the rear of their businesses as attractive as the front of their establishments.
F2.	Implement the Main Street Streetscape Plan.
Objective G. Encourage the underground placement of electrical utilities in new development.	
G1.	Modify the zoning ordinance to require that electrical and other utilities be placed underground for new construction.