

7.0 TRANSPORTATION



Abstract

The Transportation chapter considers the needs of Town residents including public transportation, interstate and regional travel, pedestrians, cyclists and daily vehicle trips.

The Transportation chapter is intended to maintain a high level of service for the various modes of transportation by:

- Promoting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods for the residents, businesses, and visitors to the Town.*
- Participating in regional planning efforts with Hanover County to enhance transportation for all areas surrounding the Town.*
- Promoting safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation including automobile, transit, walking, and bicycling by continuing the pedestrian-scale, well-connected network of streets.*
- Maintaining a high level of service on all Town roads. New development shall address all negative impacts to local roads.*

The Town of Ashland recognizes the importance of a safe and efficient transportation system to serve existing residents, as well as to influence the location of future development. The Town owns and maintains all public streets within the Town limits. It will be critical in the future to ensure that development, both within the Town and in the adjacent unincorporated areas, does not overwhelm Town streets.

The Comprehensive Plan describes a multi-modal system of streets, sidewalks, trails and rail that are intended to absorb anticipated growth. The Plan establishes policies for treatment of public streets, clarifying the role of the public and private sectors in providing street improvements, prioritizing street improvements, planning for future transportation needs, and providing for public transportation. The Plan seeks to enhance the livability of the whole community by increasing accessibility to employment, shopping, recreation, and other amenities, while reducing vehicle trips and promoting pedestrian & bicycling interest.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character.

- Ensure that the street network is walkable and not congested.

2. Protect Ashland's Unique Features

- Encourage completion and extension of the street grid network.
- Recognize the railroad and station as centerpieces of the Ashland community.

3. Manage and Enhance Our Green Town

- Ensure that the Town is easily accessible, therefore attractive for business development.

4. Encourage Continued Variety in Ashland

- Local neighborhood streets should be developed less intensely than collector and arterial streets. There should be a clear distinction between streets designed to meet various levels of service.

5. Promote Continued Economic Development

- Perform a Downtown parking study to assess current and future parking needs and address any deficiencies.

6. Provide a High Level of Government Services.

- Maintain and improve our existing street network locally to provide superior results, compared to VDOTs statewide maintenance program.

7.1 TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP

The Transportation Plan Map, T-1, is hereby incorporated to be a part of this chapter. The transportation plan shows the ultimate street classification for each existing and proposed street throughout the Town.

Corridors of Statewide Significance

In developing a statewide transportation plan, eleven Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) were identified. The CoSS include major roadways, rail lines, airports, ports and transit services across the state. These corridors were deemed significant in developing a state-wide, intermodal network of transportation options. One of the eleven CoSS, the Washington to North Carolina Corridor, traverses Ashland. The corridor is primarily defined by Interstate-95, often referred to as the Main Street of the east Coast. Within the Town, this corridor includes I-95, Route 1, CSX National Gateway Corridor (freight rail), and Amtrak Northeast Corridor (passenger rail).

Future Transportation Plan

Study Areas

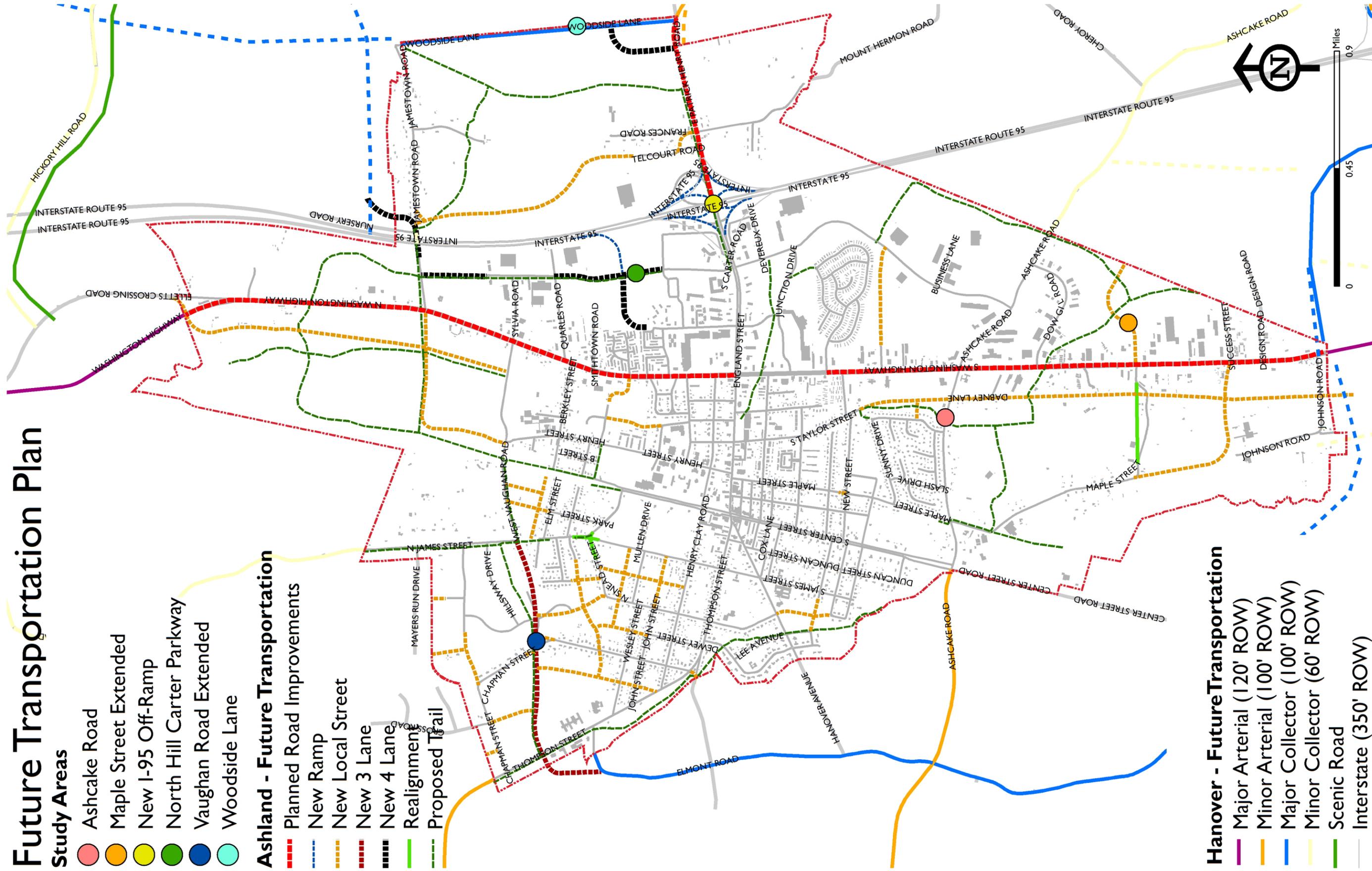
- Ashcake Road
- Maple Street Extended
- New I-95 Off-Ramp
- North Hill Carter Parkway
- Vaughan Road Extended
- Woodside Lane

Ashland - Future Transportation

- - - Planned Road Improvements
- - - New Ramp
- - - New Local Street
- - - New 3 Lane
- - - New 4 Lane
- - - Realignment
- - - Proposed Trail

Hanover - Future Transportation

- - - Major Arterial (120' ROW)
- - - Minor Arterial (100' ROW)
- - - Major Collector (100' ROW)
- - - Minor Collector (60' ROW)
- - - Scenic Road
- - - Interstate (350' ROW)



The Code of Virginia requires local governments through which designated corridors of statewide significant traverses to note such corridors on the Transportation Map as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Urban Development Area (UDA)

As effort to promote economic development and promote the coordination between transportation and land use planning, the Town of Ashland will be designated as an Urban Development Area (UDA). UDAs were authorized by the Code of Virginia in 2007 (Virginia Code § 15.2-2223.1.) and can be any areas designated by a locality in their comprehensive plan for higher density development that incorporate the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development. The advantages of delineating such areas include proactively planning and coordinating growth, reducing pressure to develop in rural areas, supporting cost effectiveness by utilizing existing and planned infrastructure, and facilitating private sector investment in infrastructure. Additionally, this designation will allow the Town access to grants and technical assistance in enhancing Ashland’s aging transportation infrastructure.

Ashland 2020 Transportation Plan

The Town’s most recent transportation plan was completed in 2001. As part of the planning process, a study was conducted to address immediate, short-term, mid-term and long-term transportation needs within the Town boundaries up to the year 2020. It has been utilized as a planning resource by the Town Council and staff to evaluate and prioritize a wide range of multimodal transportation improvements.

In updating the 2020 Transportation Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (PR.6), staff should adopt a “Complete Streets” policy to guide planning (T.9.1). This policy could be used in coordination with DRPT’s Multimodal System Design Guidelines and existing policies detailed in section 7.3 Roadways, Design Guidelines Handbook, and VDOT specifications, as well as policies for trails (T.13), bikeways (T.14 and T.15), and pedestrian access (T.16 and PR.6) to establish clear design standards.

Comments received in the Comprehensive Plan review mentioned pedestrian and bike connections along Ashcake Road, W. Vaughan Road extended, and from the interstate highway area to downtown should be priority areas of emphasis.

Policy T.1 Ashland 2020 Transportation Plan Updates

In lieu of an immediate new transportation study, several streets warrant further study and updating from the Transportation 2020 Plan. These locations are as follows and shown on the Transportation Plan Updates map on page 7-7:

- New Interstate 95 off-ramp



- North Hill Carter Parkway
- Vaughan Road Extended
- Maple Street Extended
- Ashcake Road
- Woodside Lane

Policy T.2 Right-of-Way Dedication

The Town shall update its existing policy regarding right-of-way dedication and make the policy part of the Town Code to ensure that adjacent right-of-way dedication to the ultimate right-of-way width occurs at the time of site plan or subdivision approval. Additionally, this policy should note under which circumstances a developer would be responsible for building a segment of roadway shown on the Plan, or when a cash proffer may be appropriate.

7.2 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING IN ASHLAND

Policy T.3 Metropolitan Planning Organization Participation

The Town of Ashland is a voting member of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO's mission is to serve as the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making throughout the region. The Town shall continue to be an active participant in the MPO to secure funding to implement improvements shown in the thoroughfare plan.

Hanover County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027

Prior to their 2007 Comprehensive Plan update Hanover's Suburban Service Areas were concentrated on the east end of the County and along the Interstate 95 and Route 1 corridors (including the Town of Ashland.) In the 2007 update, the Town is now shown surrounded by Suburban Service Area, including a newly established Suburban Transitional residential area west of Ashland, and a large new business park northeast of Ashland in the Hickory Hill/Old Ridge area. These development changes will have an effect on transportation patterns in and around Ashland.

As part of the Hanover County comprehensive plan update, the Hanover County Major Thoroughfare Plan was created. Specific recommendations are identified to accommodate future anticipated changes in County land use. The recommended improvements as quoted from the Hanover County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027 that are nearest Ashland are:

- Recommended for reclassification as a Major Collector—Elmont Road (State Route 626) between West Patrick Henry Road (State

Route 54) and Willow Farm Drive (private) from Minor Collector (60' ROW)

- Recommended for reclassification as a Minor Collector—Proposed intersection improvements at East Patrick Henry Road (State Route 54), Woodside Lane and Providence Church Road (State Route 662).
- Proposed new Major Collector road (100' ROW) between Washington Highway (U.S. Route 1, north of Jamestown Road) and Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646).
- Proposed new Major Collector road (100' ROW) between Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646) and East Patrick Henry Road (State Route 54).

Previously noted on Map T-1, is an area to the northwest of Town removed by Hanover County from their “Suburban Service” classification. This change removed the requirement for extending water and sewer facilities which lowers the density needed to develop this area. The specific need for a transportation study is no longer needed, but it is recommended that the County coordinate land use and transportation planning efforts surrounding the Town of Ashland with the Town, to assure that County and Town policies and plans are coordinated to the extent practicable.

Policy T.4 Joint Transportation Planning with Hanover County

The Town shall coordinate with Hanover County to ensure that appropriate connections occur across the Town boundaries. A detailed thoroughfare plan should be created jointly for all areas surrounding the Town, including recommended improvements for Route 1, Route 54, Ashcake Road and the proposed new interchange along Interstate 95 north of Ashland. Additionally, the Town shall assess any transportation improvements and development proposals in Hanover County for any negative impact to the Town and would request that the County work with the Town and developers to mitigate any impacts through proffers and infrastructure improvements. Specifically, Ashland desires that the road systems to be built in the County would encourage residents to drive, walk or bike into the heart of our Downtown. Although, alternate routes should be planned to avoid increased congestion on Route 54 and Ashcake Road during peak traffic periods. The Town will coordinate with the County in the same manner on any transportation improvements that may impact the County.

Policy T.5 County/Town Transportation Study Area

The Town shall initiate action on the joint transportation study area with Hanover County.



Rail Transportation

The CSX National Gateway Corridor, the north/south rail line through Town, is an important transportation resource for Ashland and the region. Owned by CSX Transportation, the primary use is freight transport with an average of 38 freight trains passing through Town every day. The daytime track speed limit is restricted to 35 mph within Town limits. Rail traffic is spread out throughout the day. This line is also used by Amtrak for its Northeast Corridor line to provide passenger rail service between Washington D.C./points north and Richmond/points south. A total of eight Amtrak trains stop in Ashland every day (four traveling northbound and four traveling southbound.) Amtrak's Auto Train also passes through Ashland on its way from Florida to Lorton, VA.

As the railroad continues to be a source of pride for the Town, part of this good relationship can be attributed to the quiet zone allowed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). A quiet zone is a section of a rail line that contains one or more consecutive public crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded. The continuation of the quiet zone is based on a calculation of a FRA formula and the number of accidents that occur at crossings within the zone.

Policy T.6 Rail Crossing Improvements, CIP Project #TR-019

The Town shall work to ensure the safety of all rail crossings within the Town boundaries to insure the continuation of the quiet zone designation. This shall be accomplished with the installation of new rail crossing signals and double guards (arms). For instance on England Street, the crossing already has an older version of constant warning time technology, so the Town would need to add a second gate on each side to disallow the possibility of passage through the lowered guard arms. This rail crossing improvement project should be undertaken in a phased approach completing each crossing individually, as financially feasible.

As mentioned in Land Use, Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation (VDRPT) included the Ashland station in a statewide in-depth station planning and land use analysis. The study was conducted for several reasons including the usefulness of market assessments to predict the scale of future development and recommendations for future planning for the redevelopment of station areas, specifically the use of transit oriented development. Recommendations made in this study, such as the inclusion of Mixed-Use zoning in the Downtown area, have been included within this Comprehensive Plan.

The future use of the CSX line for local commuter rail or high-speed rail continues to be considered by the region. Planning is still ongoing to determine the feasibility of these potential transportation services. At this

time, the exact parameters of these services are not known. Continued coordination is needed to determine how the Town may benefit from these services. A full-service station will be needed to accommodate these future transportation services. The historic station facility, located in the downtown area just north of England Street offers minimal services and is only a “whistle stop” for Amtrak. Alternate station sites were identified in the consultant study: 1) at its current location (downtown), and 2) on the north end of town. Each station site (the current site and the alternative) will need to be evaluated once the nature and level of the high-speed rail service has been better defined.

Policy T.7 Future of the Railroad

The Town shall work with CSX, Amtrak, VDRPT and other entities to promote use of the current train station to meet future uses while maintaining the character of the existing rail. Ashland is vehemently opposed to options which would lead to the absolute destruction of our Town’s quality of life (e.g. the addition of a third rail through downtown).

Ashland’s guiding principles articulate the character of the existing rail as follows:

“The railroad tracks and the train station are located in the center of town. Few towns in America have passenger rail service, even fewer cherish their railroad as a fundamental part of life, and have the historic downtown, fine residential neighborhoods, and tree-lined walkable streets, all lining the tracks.”

Furthermore, Ashland’s guiding principles define small town character as beautiful historic neighborhoods, historic railroad downtown, and historic college campus, all of which are in the possible path of destruction.



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Transit Services

Because public transit services have been a persistent concern in Ashland and the Richmond region for a number of years, numerous studies and several plans have been completed. A plan completed in 2002 by Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) and VDRPT, proposed an express route and two local routes with detailed routing, scheduling, cost and ridership estimates. This plan was not implemented due to financial constraints.

In 2008, a *Richmond Regional Mass Transit Study* was conducted by the Richmond Area MPO. This included Ashland in a comprehensive study of the potential need, development and implementation of a regional mass transit system for the Greater Richmond region. Service recommendations were made for commuter bus or rail service along the I-95 Corridor terminating in Ashland and local bus service on the Route 1 Corridor also terminating in Ashland. A recommendation was also made that Ashland be included in demand-responsive paratransit services for the transportation of disabled individuals.

In 2008, the *Town of Ashland Transit Services Plan* was completed with VDRPT as consultant. The purpose of the planning study was to develop a transit route and service plan to devise a public transit program to connect residents and students with employment, shopping, entertainment, health care, and other destinations within the Town limits. Through thorough examination of Town demographics, existing need, public opinion and peer examples, a recommendation was made for the implementation of an Ashland Transit Circulator. Continued partnerships with VDRPT, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and GRTC are necessary to access various funding sources and for potential expansion to serve commuter needs into Richmond.

The common theme throughout these studies is the general lack of public transportation options in the outlying areas of the Metropolitan region, including Ashland and Hanover County. This includes transport needs of dependent populations of senior citizens, persons with disabilities and low-income workers traveling to employment locations.

Policy T.8 Public Transit

A continued working relationship with VDRPT, VRE, GRTC and related transportation organizations is necessary for continued support to create a public transit system in the Town of Ashland. The Town shall continue to attempt to obtain sufficient funding through grants and other sources to implement a local transit circulator, as suggested by the *Town of Ashland Transit Services Plan*. The Town shall also encourage additional services from GRTC to link the Town to the rest of the Richmond and Washington areas.

Table T-1

Roadway Designations
Principle Arterials
Interstate 95
Minor Arterials
U.S. Route 1
Route 54
Ashcake Road
Henry Street
Archie Cannon Drive
Collectors
North and South Center Streets
Taylor Street
Berkley Street
College Avenue
Hill Carter Parkway
Myrtle Street
Pleasant Street

7.3 ROADWAYS

Town maintains all roadways and receives funding from VDOT annually for maintenance. This maintenance includes snow removal, restriping, paving, sidewalks, etc.

Policy T.9 New Roadways

All roads shall be built to a minimum of VDOT standards. Utilities should be placed underground when new roads are built or existing ones are replaced.

Policy T.9.1 Complete Streets

As defined by Smart Growth America, Complete Streets are a means of defining transportation planning, design, maintenance, and funding decisions. A Complete Streets policy ensures that, from the start, projects are planned and designed to meet the needs of every community member, regardless of their age, ability, or how they travel. This policy directs town staff to establish an ideal Complete Streets policy to include the following:

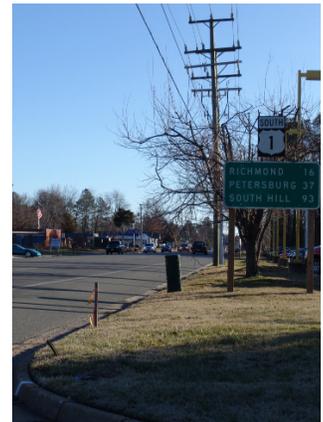
- Vision for why the community wants complete streets
- Specifies that transportation planning includes ‘all users’ includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes
- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes
- Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy

Policy T.10 Interstate 95

Of all roadways within the Town, the Town has the least influence regarding the maintenance and operation of this corridor; however this roadway most likely has the highest amount of economic impact of all roadways in the area. With coordination from VDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Town should endorse a specific design for a new exit ramp off Interstate 95 at the Route 54 exit, as shown on Map T-2 (page 7-7), and require dedication of the land required for the reconstruction of said interchange when adjacent properties develop.

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are corridors providing longer distance trips from area to area within the region. Access to Principal Arterials should be





limited to ensure that through movement is prioritized.

Principal Arterials consist generally of four to six lanes, with a median, and should fit within a 110-140 foot right-of-way.

Access to major arterials should be limited to:

- Right-in/right-out movements every 300-400 feet
- Median breaks for full access movement every 650-800 feet
- Signalized intersections shall be no closer than 1000-2000 feet.

Minor Arterials

Minor Arterials are corridors providing shorter distance trips from destination to destination within the town, as well as some longer distance regional trips. Minor Arterials do not penetrate into neighborhoods. Access to Minor Arterials should be limited, yet still provide sufficient access to adjoining lands.

Minor arterials consist generally of four lanes, with median separation, and should fit within a 90 foot right-of-way. Access to minor arterials should be limited to:

- Right-in/right-out movements every 250-300 feet
- Median breaks for full access movement every 400-500 feet.
- Signalized intersections shall be no closer than 650-800 feet.

Collectors

Collectors are shorter roadways that penetrate neighborhoods, collect traffic and direct it to the arterial network, especially distributing traffic between neighborhoods and commercial areas. Access to Collectors should provide sufficient access to adjoining lands, while still maintaining efficient flow.

Collectors are generally three to four lanes, with or without median separation, and should fit within a 60 to 90 foot right-of-way, depending on the number of lanes, and whether a median is utilized. Bike lanes should be encouraged along minor collector routes.

Access to collectors should be limited to:

- Right-in/right-out movements every 150-250 feet
- Median breaks for full access movement every 200-450 feet.
- Signalized intersections shall be no closer than 400-700 feet.

Note: Spacing standards along the Route 54 Corridor between U.S. 1 and the downtown area may not be applicable due to the densely developed character of the area.

Access for individual residential driveways should be discouraged along collectors, as access should be provided from local streets. Note: This is not intended to promote homes backing up to the collector roadway.

Local Streets

Local Streets are all other streets, not classified on the Transportation Plan Map. These streets are intended to provide direct access to properties. Through traffic should still be possible on local streets, as they are intended to supplement the higher-order streets with alternate routes as needed. Through streets should be laid out so as not to direct an overwhelming amount of through traffic onto any single local street.

Local streets should be designed so as to provide traffic calming measures, particularly by not being excessively wide and providing on-street parking on both sides. Sidewalks wide enough for two persons to walk side-by-side (approximately 5 feet in width) should be included on local streets.

7.4 CONNECTIVITY

Policy T.11 Street Grid Network

As the Town grows, the existing street grid network should be expanded. Opportunities for expansion to the network should be provided via stub streets at appropriate locations. Cul-de-sacs shall continue to be strongly discouraged. The use of existing 'paper streets' to serve new developments is encouraged. Paper streets are streets that have been planned by the Town and for which the dedicated right-of-way has been acquired, but no improvements have been made.

Policy T.12 Shared Access

Street access for adjacent commercial parcels should be shared. Additionally, connections between adjacent commercial parcels via private access should be encouraged to allow trips between adjacent sites without requiring a vehicle to use the public roadway.

Residential access can be shared through the use of alleyways and shared driveways. As is mentioned in Community Character & Design, the Town desires that all garages should be located to the rear of residential structures. The use of alleyways is encouraged as a method to avoid attached front loaded garages. To limit access points onto roadways, the use of shared residential driveways is encouraged.

Non-Motorized Transportation

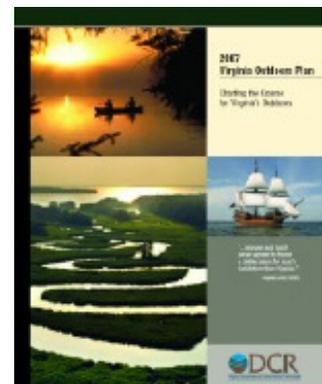
As stated in the Guiding Principles, a valued quality of Ashland is the walkability of the community and the access to national bike routes. This is valued not only in Ashland, but statewide. The 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey found that walking for pleasure is the most popular recreational pursuit in the state. Ashland's natural setting and hospitable climate makes the Town an ideal destination for recreational activities.

In addition to being a healthy lifestyle pursuits, walking, along with

East Coast



Greenway



cycling also have economic benefits. A study conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Georgia found that the Virginia Creeper Trail (VCT) users spent approximately \$2.5 million over the study period (2003-2004) on recreational visits related to this trail. The VCT is a 35-mile scenic trail in Southwestern Virginia. Non-local visitor spending generated \$1.6 million in economic impacts and supported close to 30 jobs. This is but one example of the economic impact potential of scenic trails. Recreational travelers passing through the area on long distance trips may be interested in camping sites, bicycle supplies or dining opportunities while in Ashland.

East Coast Greenway

Trails are most valuable when part of a regional connection. The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a long-term trail project that aims to connect all of the major cities on the east coast from Maine to Florida utilizing mostly off-road routes on traffic-free trail segments. While this project is large in size and scope, the Greenway is more than a quarter of the way to linking these traffic-free trail segments. An interim travel route, composed of carefully chosen and field-checked on-road linkages, has been defined and mapped, allowing experienced cyclists to use the entire route. An on-road portion has been mapped through the Town of Ashland. The Route enters the Town on North James Street, turns on West Patrick Street, and follows Center Street out of Town. The identification process for the off-road trail sections through Ashland is a work in progress. Possible trails for inclusion are Railside Trail and the Ashland Trolley Line.



Policy T.13 Regional Trails

In addition to improving and completing the Town’s network of trails, the Town should continue to work with Hanover County and other regional partners, including the East Coast Greenway Organization to develop a connected trail system.

The Town’s most recent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was created in 1998 with the purpose of establishing a vision and framework for developing the trails, sidewalks, and other improvements that address the needs of Ashland residents. The plan defines long term goals for development and provides criteria for prioritizing improvements. It is intended to be an ever evolving document that adapts to the changing needs of the community and complements the Town’s Park and Recreation Master Plan. The updating of this plan is addressed in policy PR.6.

Policy T.14 Bikeways

The 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* suggests that “State and Local agencies should enhance and maintain signage along the Interstate Bike Route 1 and Bike Route 76 through the region. When road improvements are

made, a bike lane should be added, and facilities for bicyclists should be made available along the route.” This reiterates the new VDOT standard that all new and improved roads should include bike/pedestrian accommodations. This new standard should be incorporated into the updating of the 1998 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as well as any transportation planning that occurs in the future.

Additional information is provided in Chapter 9, Parks and Recreation, relative to bikeways.

Roadway Markings

The Federal Highway Administration has published a new Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which contains a number of newly established uniform standards that apply to bicycle facilities. One addition is the inclusion of Shared Lane Marking also known as sharrows. A sharrow is a pavement marking installed on streets that are too narrow for conventional bike lanes. The sharrow is marked 11 feet from the curb, or approximately 4 feet from parked cars. It is intended to indicate where cyclists should ride to avoid traveling within the door zone of parked cars. It also alerts motorists to share the road with cyclists and conveys that the road is a preferred bike route. The sharrow’s main purpose is to give bicyclists freedom to move further to the left within travel lane, rather than brave the door zone, squeezed between moving and parked cars. Without such markings, bicyclists might seek refuge on the sidewalk or travel in the wrong direction. The overall goals are: to improve the position of bicyclists and motorists on roads without bike lanes, reduce aggressive motorist behavior, encourage correct bicycling behavior and increase the comfort of (and therefore the number of) bicyclists on shared roads.

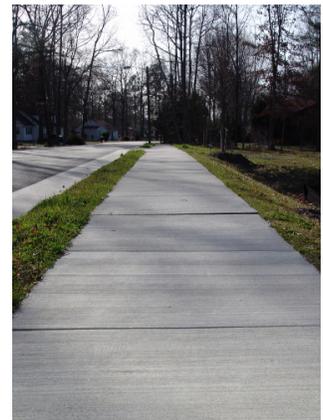
Policy T.15 Sharrows

The appropriateness of shared lane marking or sharrows should be investigated within the Town. If found to be a useful addition, the application of these road markings is recommended, the application of these roadway markers should be considered and prioritized as funding becomes available.

Policy T.16 Pedestrian Access

The Town considers pedestrian safety a top priority. The Sidewalk Improvement Plan shall continue to be updated on a regular basis. Several methods to be considered for implementation to create safer intersections are:

- Use “Pedestrian Crossing” warning signs with pedestrian-actuated flashing beacons, which alert oncoming traffic to pedestrians in the crosswalk;



- Move the vehicle STOP line farther back from crosswalk and add stop here for pedestrians sign;
- Improved crosswalks markings;
- For greatest effectiveness, include curb ramps or curb extensions;
- Preserve sight distances at intersections (limit landscaping and fencing in the sight triangle)
- Install bulb-outs at intersections to reduce pedestrian crossing distance;
- Create curb ramps to provide a safe transition from sidewalk to street and create an environment easily assessable to persons with disabilities.

Downtown Sidewalks

The Town wishes to repair and reconstruct various sidewalks throughout the Downtown areas. One impediment to this task is the location of some property lines in the Town. It is frequently the case that the property line is located within the existing sidewalk. With the successful streetscape improvements along Railroad Avenue, further study needs to be conducted to establish a redesign plan for England Street to make it a beautiful, walkable, and memorable street, as detailed in Policy CD.9.1.

Safe Routes to School

The National Safe Routes to School Program was founded in order to assist local communities to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school, to improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to school; and to facilitate projects and activities that will reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools. The goal of the Town is to provide additional sidewalks and cross walks, and adult supervision to create a safe environment for biking and walking. Educational programs for “sharing the road” would include safety information for drivers, pedestrians and bikers.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs enable community leaders, schools and parents across the United States to improve safety and encourage more children to safely walk and bicycle to school. In the process, programs are working to reduce traffic congestion and improve health and the environment, making communities more livable for everyone.

More children biking and walking to school would also result in fewer vehicle trips, therefore lowering the exhaust emissions and reducing the impact on the environment. It would prevent overcrowding on school busses and shorten bus routes. Through this program, the Town has received grant money to complete several sections of sidewalks around town. The first sidewalk set for construction is Hanover Street between South James Street and Sneed Street. Provided funds are available the

next section constructed will be South James Street from Thompson Street to Hanover Avenue. The Town has applied for another round of SRTS grant funding to fund work on pedestrian improvements on the Maple Street sidewalk, North James Street trail, Duncan Street sidewalk, and the Stebbins Street sidewalk. New Street, South Taylor Street and Pleasant Street have been completed with Town of Ashland funds.

Wayfinding

A successful transportation system is marked by good signage. A wayfinding system has been developed by the Town with the assistance a group of stakeholders and VHB Landmark. As stated in policy CD.34, new street signs meeting the updated design standard should be used throughout Town.

7.5 PARKING

Parking has been an issue of concern within the Downtown area due to the relatively high residential, commercial, and institutional density. A study for this area is needed, but with continued encouragement to develop mixed-use residential space, additional parking needs will arise and should be addressed on a case by case basis.

Policy T.17 Downtown Parking

Special issues are often associated with downtown areas where people converge to work, shop and visit. Lack of parking is sometimes cited as a reason for the declining vitality of a downtown business district. While parking is not the sole solution, it is important to serve the needs of the various users of the Downtown area. Concerns have been raised in Ashland over a perceived lack of parking in the Downtown area. For this reason, a parking study and plan should be completed for the Downtown area including from the Route 1 intersection on England Street to the James Street intersection on Thompson Street. This study should analyze walking patterns, driving access patterns, employee parking needs, a predicted total demand by the customers for all the businesses located here and an apparent lack of signage. The average amount of time each space is occupied should be noted to determine the turnover rate.

Recommendations to address Downtown parking challenges are located in Community Character & Design Policy CD.12. One of the recommendations is shared parking. This is a tool through which adjacent property owners share their parking lots and reduce the number of parking spaces that each would provide on their individual properties. In these locations, with shops and restaurants lining the sidewalks, people often park in one spot and then walk from one destination to another. The effect is that the various uses share the same parking spaces. If ad-



adjacent land uses have different peak hours of parking demand, then they can share some of the same parking spaces.

Randolph-Macon College parking has an impact on the areas surrounding the College. In order to reduce the impact of a potential increase in student parking, R-MC is required to submit a parking plan for all new site plans to the Town Council for approval.

7.6 TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The Town will utilize existing funding methods and procedures for the development of new and the maintenance of exiting multi-modal transportation systems.

Public Road Maintenance

Maintenance of public roads within the Town, for example repairing of pot holes or repaving of streets, is completed by the Ashland Public Works Department. However, VDOT provides funds for the maintenance of public roads utilizing a statewide formula based upon population and number of miles of road.

Policy T.18 Long Term Projects

Continue to work with the Richmond Metropolitan Planning Organization and VDOT to fund large expansion and new construction road projects by getting projects on the Six-Year Improvement Program and the Transportation Improvement Program.

Policy T.19 Available Funding Sources

When feasible, work to obtain funding through federal, state, and regional funding sources for all transit improvements.

Possible sources for VDOT Funding are:

The Urban Maintenance Program provides payments to cities and towns in the urban system for maintenance, construction and reconstruction. Payments are based on lane miles and functional classification of the roadways within the Corporate Limits. These funds are used primarily for maintenance activities or expansion of facilities, such as adding sidewalks within the existing roadway network.

The Urban Construction Program is based on Section 33.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia which provides that 30 percent of the combined federal and state funds available for construction are apportioned to qualifying municipalities based on population. These funds are typically for the roadways classified as Arterial, and projects are a part of the Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP).

Other funding sources are through an application process through VDOT, even though some have federal financial support:

The Transportation Enhancement Program fosters more choices for travel by providing funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, and the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into trails. Many communities also use the program to acquire, restore and preserve scenic or historic sites. The program offers many opportunities to enhance our travel throughout Virginia.

The Revenue Sharing Program provides additional funding for use by a county, city, or town to construct or improve the highway systems within such county, city, or town, with statutory limitations on the amount of state funds authorized per locality. Locality funds are matched with state funds for qualifying projects.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program assists localities, schools, and non-profit organizations by funding SRTS programs (non-infrastructure) and safety improvement projects (infrastructure).

The Metropolitan Planning Organization makes recommendations to VDOT on funding requests from localities for projects in the SYIP.

To Do List

1. Conduct study as preparation for Transportation Plan 2020 update for the following areas: New Interstate 95 off-ramp, North Hill Carter Parkway, Vaughan Road Extended, and Maple Street Extended. Also Update road standards per Policy T.1.
2. Update existing policy regarding right-of-way dedication and make the policy part of the Town Code to ensure that adjacent right-of-way dedication to the ultimate right-of-way width occurs at the time of site plan or subdivision approval. Additionally, this policy should note under which circumstances a developer would be responsible for building a segment of roadway shown on the plan, or when a cash proffer may be appropriate.
3. The Town shall coordinate with Hanover County to ensure that appropriate connections occur across the Town boundaries. A detailed thoroughfare plan should be created jointly for all areas surrounding the Town.
4. The Town shall work to ensure the safety of all rail crossings within the Town boundaries to insure the continuation of the quiet zone designation. This shall be accomplished with the installation of new rail crossing signals and double guards (arms).
5. The Town shall work with CSX, Amtrak, VDRPT and other entities to promote use of the current train station to meet future uses.
6. A continued working relationship with VDRPT, VRE, GRTC and related transportation organizations is necessary for continued support to create a public transit system in the Town of Ashland.
7. The Town should endorse a specific design for a new exit ramp off Interstate 95 at the Route 54 exit and require dedication of the land required for the reconstruction of said interchange when adjacent properties develop.
8. The Town should continue to work with Hanover County and other regional partners, including the East Coast Greenway Organization to develop a connected trail system.
9. The use of sharrows should be investigated within the Town.
10. The Sidewalk Improvement Plan shall continue to be updated on a regular basis.
11. A parking plan for the Town should be created from Route 1 to James Street which addresses the lack of signage directing visitors to the available parking areas in the Downtown area.