



## City of Cortland Visioning For the Comprehensive Plan

The general public was invited to a series of three visioning meetings for the City's comprehensive planning process. These meetings were held in late November and early December 2007. The process was designed to create a shared image of what the community wants about twenty years into the future. The remaining planning process will help plan how to achieve the vision.

The following pages illustrate the existing community characteristics, categorized into positive and negative areas. Participants voted on what characteristics were most important to them. Desired features of Cortland's future are then listed, and will be used to generate a vision statement.

## City of Cortland Comprehensive Plan Visioning Meeting November 28, 2007

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\*\* The numbers beside each attribute or characteristic indicate the number of votes each characteristic received. Therefore, the characteristic with the most votes was found to be the most important.

### VISIONING:

#### *Positive Attributes:*

1. Location – proximity to State parks, Ithaca, Syracuse beautiful area (12)
2. Natural environment, rural setting, hills, valleys, nice area of the State (8)
3. Responsive City services – Police/Fire, lighting and snowplowing (7)
4. Neighborhoods (7)
5. School system and its positive rating (6)
6. Architecturally beautiful homes and buildings (6)
7. Community Development – Thoma Development, senior housing (5)
8. Hospital, its location, services including weekend care (4)
9. Locally owned newspaper (4)
10. Plentiful water and good quality water (4)
11. Conservative attitude on part of residents (4)
12. College activities (cultural and sports) (3)
13. Special public interest groups – CAPE, SPCA, CNY SNAP (3)
14. Community cooperation among agencies (3)
15. Walkable community (2)
16. Not for profits – YWCA, YMCA, churches (2)
17. Smaller community colleges (2)
18. Low crime (2)
19. Quality of life (2)
20. Senior Citizen Housing, its location; subsidized housing and Friendship House(1)
21. Railroad (1)
22. Sports center (1)
23. Clean environment, good air quality (1)
24. Parks, youth programs and recreational/outdoor activities (1)
25. Tioughnioga River, proposed riverwalk, canoe opportunities (1)
26. Community activities – East End, Pumpkinfest, Wine/Art Festival (1)
27. Volunteer groups - RSVP
28. Community access channel
29. Restaurants
30. Interstate 81
31. Trees in City
32. Climate
33. Historic district and potential to expand historic district
34. Beauty of holiday season
35. Well-occupied downtown
36. Affordable bus service

*Negative Attributes:*

1. Eroding tax base / lack of adequate tax base (13)
2. Inadequate / inconsistent enforcement of codes (12)
3. Deteriorating housing stock (9)
4. Entrapment of welfare population, lack of case-management for life skills (8)
5. Public apathy toward public issues (7)
6. Lack of employment opportunities for young people (7)
7. Low paying jobs, lack of living wage (6)
8. Lack of cooperation among agencies and surrounding communities (6)
9. Opportunity for poor kids to participate (6)
10. High taxes (6)
11. Lack of affordable housing (4)
12. Quality and control of rental property (4)
13. Crimes (2)
14. Lack of space for city facilities (2)
15. Flooding, Lack of stormwater management plan, Otter Creek (2)
16. Poor student performance / drop-out rate (2)
17. Need city grant writer (1)
18. Community does not welcome diversity (1)
19. Poor gateway entrances to Cortland (1)
20. Heavy traffic (truck traffic) in City (1)
21. Lack of inter-urban transportation system to support environmental protection (1)
22. Loss of single-family homes (1)
23. Some water/air pollution (1)
24. Lack of support staff for city services
25. Lack of respect for citizen complaints and public committees
26. Lack of good promotion of city
27. Need to expand bus service
28. Water / flood control
29. Protection measures for water supply and quality
30. Lack of quality low-income housing
31. Tax-free institutions do not pay for services
32. Protection of taxable property
33. Weather – harsh winters
34. One-way Main Street
35. Exit 11 gateway, vacant gas station
36. Inadequate public transportation
37. Lack of consideration for zoning regulations
38. Lack of compliance with emission control (bus, trucks, trains)
39. Lack of high-tech industry
40. No dog park
41. Some poor roads
42. Noisy tenants, students, rowdy population
43. Bars, and drunk students
44. Interstate 81 bringing crime, drugs, gangs

*Desired Characteristics:*

1. Retain historic buildings
2. Great schools
3. Riverwalk and bike routes / trails
4. Plentiful parking downtown
5. Student housing parking
6. Walking trail at the waterworks with nature signs
7. More downtown store variety
8. Active citizen participation
9. Good jobs and livable wages
10. Low number of bars / pubs
11. College students avoiding alcohol and drugs by participating in other activities
12. More college participation in the community
13. Alternative and affordable utilities such as solar power
14. Advance technologies to utilize utilities such as methane from sewage
15. Flexible business hours for public services
16. Open, cooperative and responsive government
17. Low taxes
18. Collect on loss of revenue from tax exempt entities – stormwater utility fee, sprinkler utility fee PILOT
19. Consolidation and shared services between municipalities, sharing facilities
20. Modern fire station and jail
21. Utilize university services, more Town gown relationships
22. Adherence to the comprehensive plan
23. Better management of rental properties in R-1 and R-2 zoning districts
24. Expand historic district
25. Maintained aesthetic appearance with trees and smooth sidewalks
26. Bike path, pedestrian paths, good sidewalks, parks
27. Welcoming, attractive entrances to the City
28. More uses for parks – families – not just playground and sports fields
29. Clean, healthy place to live and drink water
30. “Green” city – utilizing alternative energy
31. Preventative measure for crime
32. Community involvement
33. A greater use of public transportation - bus, trolley, train
34. City-wide Wi-Fi
35. Variety of friendly retail opportunities
36. Appreciation and welcoming of diversity
37. Variety of businesses at Riverside Plaza
38. Civic pride
39. Maintain cultural activities
40. Enable seniors to remain in their own homes
41. More owner-occupied residences and affordable housing
42. Senior townhouse complex
43. Well-kept housing and neighborhoods
44. Create a bridge to self-sufficiency, break the cycle of systemic poverty
45. Avoid being a magnet for out-of-county welfare cases
46. Strong interest for education, reduce high school drop-outs

## City of Cortland Comprehensive Plan Visioning Meeting December 6, 2007

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### VISIONING:

#### *Positive Attributes:*

1. Great central location – (15)
2. Small town atmosphere (13)
3. Water (11)
4. Historical architecture (8)
5. University presence – SUNY Cortland, TC3, Ithaca College, Cornell, Syracuse (8)
6. Education and school system, arts, music, technology programs (6)
7. Affordable homes, real estate (6)
8. Natural beauty with four seasons (5)
9. Public parks – quality and quantity (4)
10. Low crime (4)
11. Youth activities and programs (4)
12. Public library (4)
13. Riverwalk potential (4)
14. Arts and culture (3)
15. Generosity of businesses (3)
16. Community involvement (3)
17. Good senior citizen services (3)
18. Outdoor recreation (all seasons) (2)
19. Non-profit services (1)
20. Family-businesses (local ownership) (1)
21. Medical facilities – convenience of hospital (1)
22. Downtown activities – music in the parks, festivals, parades, farmers market (1)
23. Churches / faith institutions (1)
24. Locally owned newspaper (1)
25. Local farmers (1)
26. City and county services (1)
27. Low teen pregnancy rates (1)
28. Friendliness
29. Collaboration of services / sharing
30. Cortland Downtown Partnership
31. Centralized government services
32. Nearby airport

*Negative Attributes:*

1. Tax-exempt property, ongoing loss of taxable property, high taxes (17)
2. Insufficient code enforcement, need for updated codes (14)
3. Lack of control of Department of Social Services (9)
4. Duplication of services and lack of sharing between agencies and government (8)
5. Lack of employment opportunities (7)
6. Gas prices due to sole supplier (6)
7. Decline in housing conditions (6)
8. Loss of industry (5)
9. Riverside plaza condition (4)
10. Government employees who are not residents (4)
11. Loss of homes for parking (4)
12. Lack of shopping opportunities (4)
13. Community pride (4)
14. Rundown, vacant housing (3)
15. Landlords (3)
16. Homeownership rates (3)
17. Population loss (2)
18. High dropout rate (2)
19. Traffic flow in city (Riverside, 281, Clinton, Pomeroy) (2)
20. High rate of public health service abuse (2)
21. Sidewalk conditions (2)
22. Lack of historic preservation (2)
23. Senior housing, low-income, and assisted living (2)
24. Coordination of intermunicipal planning efforts (2)
25. Implementation of comprehensive plan (2)
26. Lack of mass transit (1)
27. Drug usage (1)
28. Downtown vacancies on upper floors (1)
29. Lack of market-rate rental development (1)
30. Poor condition of roads (1)
31. Crows (1)
32. Environmental protection efforts and practices (1)
33. Flooding (1)
34. Lack of parenting skills
35. No dog park
36. Poor community gateway – entrances to Cortland
37. Insufficient child care services and high costs
38. Lack of cultural diversity

*Desired Characteristics:*

1. Walkable community, well marked and functional crosswalks
2. Bike lanes, bike paths
3. Parking garage for downtown and for hospital
4. Growth of tax base
5. Better public transportation
6. Annexation and consolidation of governments/services
7. Appropriate housing, and housing choices
8. More historic preservation
9. Strong downtown
10. Occupied commercial and residential properties
11. Consistent code enforcement
12. 2-way Main Street
13. Reduce duplication of public services
14. Less welfare
15. Higher socio-economic status
16. Modern fire/police facilities
17. "Green" city – utilize alternative energy
18. Tax incentives for beautification and maintenance
19. Utilize revenue tools such as a PILOT
20. Maintain low crime rate
21. Responsible landlords
22. Public art
23. Enhancement of historic district
24. More diversity
25. Active youth involvement
26. More quality greenspace and parks
27. Enhanced downtown nighttime activities
28. Less strict parking rules on Main Street
29. Seasonal odd/even parking in city

## City of Cortland Comprehensive Plan Visioning Meeting December 11, 2007

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### VISIONING:

#### *Positive Attributes:*

1. SUNY Cortland, cooperation – (15)
2. Good place to raise a family (13)
3. Historic landmarks, history, emerging museums (10)
4. Local healthcare, hospital (9)
5. Historic downtown (8)
6. Parks (7)
7. Natural beauty, rural setting (7)
8. Good water (6)
9. Good schools, neighborhood elementary schools (6)
10. Friendly people (4)
11. Four seasons, climate (4)
12. Large recreation facilities for young and active people (3)
13. Location, easy access to larger cities (3)
14. Size of Cortland, it permits accessibility to government, services, businesses (3)
15. Walkable community (3)
16. Local Office for the Aging (2)
17. Low crime rate (2)
18. Locally owned businesses (2)
19. Job opportunities (2)
20. Strong faith community (1)
21. YMCA, YWCA (1)
22. Affordable community (1)
23. Local newspaper (1)
24. Many good restaurants (1)
25. Good local government and cooperative environment
26. Neighborhood cohesion
27. Airport
28. Diverse population
29. Enhanced city entrances (new bank and drug store on Port Watson St.)
30. Physical capacity for business growth
31. Personal pride in property



*Negative Attributes:*

1. Declining tax base / high rate of tax exempt properties (15)
2. Inappropriate zoning designations and zoning enforcement (12)
3. Flooding (11)
4. Insufficient housing choices for various incomes and age groups (11)
5. Decline in housing stock (9)
6. Student behavior negatively affecting quality of neighborhood environment (8)
7. Conversion of single-family owner-occupied homes to multi-unit rentals (6)
8. Dependency on Department of Social Services (6)
9. Absentee Landlords (5)
10. Loss of manufacturing base to provide employment and income (4)
11. Crow population (4)
12. Empty Main Street storefronts and upper floors (4)
13. School dropout rate affects and reflects local economic and social trends (3)
14. Growing drug problem (3)
15. Abandoned properties (3)
16. Lack of parking (2)
17. Lack of inter-governmental cooperation (2)
18. Neighborhood noise (1)
19. Litter (1)
20. Landlocked city limits growth potential (1)
21. Lack of family market-rate rentals (1)
22. City's financial woes (1)
23. Stagnant population
24. Lack of bike trails
25. Turning into a place that isn't desirable to raise a family
26. Can't walk to meet food and clothing needs
27. No regional transportation
28. Some city gateways/approaches are declining

*Desired Characteristics:*

1. Nice residential neighborhoods
2. Thriving downtown
3. Improved gateways
4. Maintain quality educational facilities
5. Wider tax base
6. Bright shiny city
7. Safe
8. More shopping
9. More job and skills training
10. Expansion of historic district
11. Return to 1960's and 70's physical environment
12. Family-oriented neighborhoods with neighborhood activities
13. Build on museum presence
14. Locally-owned businesses
15. Preserve and enhance green space and public places
16. Vibrant business community
17. Downtown events
18. Preserve water quality
19. No flooding
20. Improved public transportation
21. Downtown nightlife for all ages
22. Occupied upper floors in downtown
23. Community beautification efforts
24. Increased usage of community parks
25. Cooperation among shareholders in city
26. Maintain Wickwire pool