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# VISIONING SESSIONS RESULTS

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## STRATEGIC PLAN MEETING NUMBER 1 - August 15, 2006

Note: 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.

### Positive Attributes

Beaudry Park/Youth Bureau are wonderful assets (9)  
Good neighbors take care of their properties (7)  
The street reconstruction project has been a plus (6)  
The neighborhood is happy to have its "own" police officer (6)  
People are excited about the Housing Visions project (6)  
The Third Rail has the potential to be a neighborhood asset (6)  
There are good restaurants in the area (5)  
The demolition of the old Wickwire building was positive (5)  
The City has been responsive to the needs of the South End (5)  
There are great businesses in the South End (4)  
Public transportation is accessible in the South End (4)  
Media coverage of the South End has been favorable (4)  
There is a feeling of community/neighborhood (3)  
The American flags on the new streetlamps look nice (3)

There are beautiful old buildings in the South End (3)  
Opportunities for new businesses/developable properties (3)  
The Neighborhood Watch provides "ownership" in the area (3)  
The South End is a gateway to the high school (2)  
Homeownership programs can be a plus for the area (2)  
The area has good schools (2)  
Alderman Quail has been an advocate for the South End (1)  
The corner of Scammel and South Main Street is safe (1)  
The area has great children (1)  
Marietta Packaging provides the area with good jobs (1)  
The South End is a walkable neighborhood (1)  
The Starr Road athletic fields will serve the South End (1)  
There is opportunity for change and a new spirit  
The population density is good

### Negative Attributes

There is no grocery store in the South End (13)  
The new lighting on South Main needs to extend to high school (8)  
There are too many drug dealers in the neighborhood (7)  
Properties not taken care of/lack of pride (7)  
Absentee landlords (7)  
More businesses are needed (6)  
There are intimidating people sitting on front porches (6)  
Parking on front lawns (6)  
Tenants are not screened (4)  
General property maintenance is needed (4)  
There is a disconnect between Main Street and So. Main Street (3)  
There is garbage by the curb every day (3)  
There is junk in front yards (3)

The curfew for children is not enforced (3)  
There are too many stray cats and dogs (3)  
There is a need for public amenities: benches, trash cans, etc. (3)  
There is too much noise in the early AM (2)  
Small children are unsupervised (2)  
There are fewer owner-occupied properties (2)  
There is too much traffic (2)  
Trash collection needs to be included in the taxes (1)  
Dilapidated buildings need to be torn down (1)  
There are too many bars in the neighborhood (1)  
There is no neighborhood watch  
There are too many vacant buildings  
More signage is needed to inform people what is available in the South End

### The South End of the Future

Participants were then asked what characteristics they would like to see in the South End neighborhood of the future.

Safe Full of respect: for others and property  
More trees  
Well maintained  
Lower density of development  
Appealing to a wide diversity of people  
Quiet  
Green energy homes  
Affordable housing  
More public transportation  
Welcoming  
A diversity of businesses

Handicapped accessible businesses  
Loft apartments for young professionals  
A mixture of development; low environmental impact of businesses  
Well lit  
A walkable community  
A coordinated transportation network including cars, pedestrians, wheelchairs, baby strollers which is available in the right-of-way

## **STRATEGIC PLAN MEETING NUMBER 2 - August 16, 2006**

An “encore” of the first meeting was held on August 16 at a later time of the day to encourage as many people to attend as possible. The same exercise to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the South End was undertaken. The results are listed following:

### **Positive Attributes**

Neighborhood pride (20)	The City's involvement with the South End (9)
Increased police presence works (17)	There is a core group of active neighbors (9)
Beaudry Park (13)	New lights on South Main Street (7)
We have a good police department (13)	The quality of the residents (7)
The new street, curbs, and sidewalks on South Main (12)	New commercial enterprises (6)
Efforts to improve area housing (9)	Public transportation (2)
Development opportunities (9)	Pine Street neighborhood

### **Negative Attributes**

Noise and traffic late at night (18)	Lack of communication from property owners (8)
Absentee landlords (18)	The disconnect between Main Street and South Main Street (7)
Poor housing conditions (16)	Lack of code enforcement (6)
Lack of police presence (13)	Too much student housing (6)
Personal safety when walking in the neighborhood (13)	Lack of parking for both residents and businesses (5)
Poor quality of life due to gangs and fighting (12)	Vandalism (4)
Loitering (12)	Lack of infill development (3)
Speeding around the entrance to the high school on South Main Street (8)	The new streetscape stops too early (2)
	Lack of a community center

## **The South End of the Future**

### Businesses:

More employment for individuals  
A new grocery store  
A coffee shop  
A new gas station  
A family type business  
A new restaurant  
A new Laundromat

### Housing:

Newly renovated homes  
More single family homes  
More homeownership opportunities  
More responsible tenants  
Tax incentives for property owners

### Parking:

Better signage  
More parking

### Sense of Neighborhood:

A new community center  
A community garden  
More South End community events  
All basic needs served

### Infrastructure:

Renovated side streets  
Lights continued throughout the neighborhood  
Curbs on all streets

### Sidewalks:

All streets will have sidewalks  
There will be incentives for keeping sidewalks up  
Sidewalks will be in better condition  
There will be better handicapped accessibility

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# RESIDENTS' MAIL SURVEY RESULTS

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# CITY OF CORTLAND SOUTH END STRATEGIC PLAN RESIDENT SURVEY

363 surveys mailed, 106 returned = 29% response rate

## I. ABOUT YOU

1. Are you:

Male 32% Female 68%

OPTIONAL:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your age?

6% 18-25    13% 26-35    19% 36-45    17% 46-55    18% 56-64    26% 65+    1% Did not answer

3. Number of persons in your household: Average 2.3 persons

4. Do you own or rent your home?    60% Own    40% Rent

5. How many years have you lived at your current residence?

6% Less than 1 year    35% 1-5 years    10% 6-10 years  
12% 11-20 years    9% 21-30 years    28% 30+ years

6. Why did you choose to live in this neighborhood?

17% Good quality housing    23% Affordable rents    16% Quality of life    17% Grew up here  
27% Family connections    16% Schools    17% Access to parks    16% Only place I could find  
21% Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is any adult in your household (who is not retired) currently unemployed?

Yes    22%    If Yes, how many are unemployed? Average 1.3 persons  
No    78%

8. Is anyone in your household a minority?

Yes    5%  
No    95%

If yes, what is your ethnicity:    1.9% Black/African American    0% Asian or Pacific Islander  
   0% Hispanic/Latino    0.9% American Indian/Alaskan Native  
   1.9% Did not answer

9. Is anyone in your household handicapped or disabled?

Yes    24%  
No    75%  
Did not answer    1%

10. Is this a single female-headed household?

Yes    46%  
No    54%

## II. ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

11. What is the most important problem facing your neighborhood? (Choose only one)

28% Vandalism/Crime    13% Lack of Parking    29% Excessive Noise    43% Housing Conditions  
8% Pollution    17% Loitering    17% Domestic Violence    39% Drugs  
7% Traffic Congestion    14% Unemployment    12% Other \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ➡

**12. Which best describes how the South End has changed since you moved here?**

9% It has become a more desirable place to live, work, or do business

60% It has become a less desirable place to live, work, or do business

14% It has not changed in its desirability as a place to live, work, or do business

6% No opinion

7% Other \_\_\_\_\_

4% Did not answer

**13. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate your level of agreement (1= strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree)**

		Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
	Responses	1	2	3	4	5
There are enough stores in the neighborhood	102	8%	8%	23%	21%	40%
I can walk to stores to get what I want	100	13%	10%	18%	19%	40%
Sidewalks and roads are in good condition	100	20%	19%	23%	9%	29%
Sidewalks are handicapped accessible	94	25%	20%	23%	13%	19%
Businesses are handicapped accessible	85	18%	21%	31%	13%	18%
Outdoor lighting is adequate for walking at night	102	20%	17%	29%	19%	16%
Pedestrians feel safe during the day	102	21%	29%	25%	14%	11%
Pedestrians feel safe at night	100	4%	2%	15%	33%	46%
There is enough parking for residents in the neighborhood	101	14%	20%	30%	12%	25%
Houses are in good condition	100	4%	9%	28%	27%	32%
There is enough police protection in the neighborhood	99	9%	18%	26%	26%	20%
Neighborhood parks are in good condition	99	30%	37%	19%	8%	5%
There are plenty of choices for a place to live	94	5%	10%	35%	26%	25%
I enjoy interacting with my neighbors	97	13%	24%	29%	19%	16%
I enjoy my neighborhood	100	15%	18%	24%	22%	21%
My job has adequate pay and fringe benefits	81	22%	21%	15%	17%	25%
Local schools provide a good education	94	28%	33%	28%	8%	4%
Landlords take care of their properties	102	4%	3%	17%	24%	53%
Public transportation is readily available	96	28%	23%	29%	10%	9%
Local government has responded to neighborhood concerns	98	6%	13%	41%	15%	25%

**14. Please mark any of the following problems that exist in your neighborhood:**

78% Poor housing conditions    28% Lack of parking    43% Loitering    57% Excessive Noise

22% Robbery/burglaries    39% Vandalism    59% Drug Dealing    25% Rodent / pest population

40% Poor street conditions    36% Violence/Assault    2% Prostitution    14% Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**15. What improvements should be made to your neighborhood to make it a nicer place? (check all that apply)**

81% Better housing/building conditions    15% Better parks/playgrounds    27% More parking

42% More police protection    19% Better health services    18% A community center

50% Better roads/ sidewalks/lighting    14% More public transportation    48% More jobs

5% More information on social services    21% More trees    7% Other: \_\_\_\_\_

42% More services within walking distance

**16. How would you like your neighborhood to look 5 to 10 years down the road? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**17. Other Comments:**



**6. Other**

**Work**

**Purchased house**

**proximity to job; liked the house**

**Proximity to job**

**Proximity to job**

**Nice apartment**

**Neighborhood**

**Liked the apartment**

**Knew the neighbors and landlord**

**House was affordable**

**Friends**

**Fair/Nice Landlord**

**Fair/Nice Landlord**

**Affordable Owner-Occupied property**

**Affordable Mortgage**

**Affordable homeownership close to SUNY Cortland**

**Affordable Homeownership**

**Affordable homeownership**

**Affordable homeownership**

**Affordable homeownership**

**Affordable homeownership**

**Affordable Homeownership**

**Affordable Homeownership**

**Affordable Homeownership**

11 Other

Theft

Speeding

Speeding

Speeding

Speeders

South Ave./Union St.

Sidewalks

Road conditions are awful

None

“low-life” residents

Everything on the list

Drunken college students

Apartment overcrowding

12 Other

Too many run down homes; owner occupied is changing to rental

Street improvements

Stewart Place is fine, but parallel streets need attention

Some streets are better while others are worse

Some do not take care of their properties

It has depreciated

better in some regards, but worse in others

**14 Other**

**Trash from other properties thrown in our yard**

**Too many cats**

**Too many cats**

**Stray Cats**

**Speeding**

**Speeding**

**Speeding**

**Sidewalks not shoveled in the winter**

**Poverty; lack of jobs; garbage along the road**

**Overcrowding in homes**

**Motorcycles and loud muffler vehicles**

**Littering**

**Children playing in the street**

**Child Neglect**

**Cats**

**15. Other**

**Trim trees that cover street lights**

**More homeownership**

**Lower taxes**

**limit on the number of cats and dogs**

**Help people get off social services**

**Citizen patrols like “Guardian Angels”**

**Animal population control**

## What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?

Would like to see South Ave. & Union St. houses cleaned up; Noise and fighting to be put to a stop; Drug dealers pushed out of the area

Would like to see it portray its old roots; A few new buildings; Better sidewalks; Proper lighting

Would like to see beautiful homes that are taken care of by landlords; Would like to see roads that do not look like they will cause damage to your car; Would love to see speed bumps on South Ave. where many kids play

Would like to see an environment where children do not have to watch people deal drugs when they walk down the street.

Would like to see a small grocery store within walking distance; Rental properties that are taken care of (paint, lawn mowed, bushes trimmed, etc.)

Would like to see a sidewalk along the south side of Denti Way for the students going to the park and High School; Repairs/paving on Denti Way; Would like to see the street sweeper more often

Well-kept homes with nice yards; Being able to walk downtown without feeling uneasy about South Main residents; Fewer Pit Bull dogs

Very good

The younger generation respecting others and not swearing or calling names; A doggie walk so people aren't letting their dogs have feces in people's front yards; Fewer cars speeding up and down South Main Street

The pool at Beaudry park opened past 5pm

The laundry house at the corner of Main & Frederick gone; The row of brown apartments on Frederick behind the old laundry mat torn down

Surrounding streets look as nice as Pine Street; Apartment houses cleaned up

## **What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?**

**Surrounding streets cleaned up including the houses, yards, businesses, & the streets themselves; Fewer people sitting around all day; More employment; New curbs, sidewalks, and intersections at Reynolds & Union and Union & Owego.**

**Similar to the North Main Street area or the West End of town**

**Similar to Main Street or the West End**

**Residential mailbox on the corner again; Nearby streets (Crawford) well-kept**

**Quality homes; Fewer vacant residences; Neighbors who take pride in how things look**

**Properties well maintained inside and outside; Clean environment with beautiful landscaping & lighting; Bicycle paths; Animal walking paths; Hancicapped accessible recreation; Fewer bars (saloons); Eco-friendly businesses; Historical buildings kept up and protected; Nature preserves to protect life**

**Properties tended to; Yards taken care of; better lighting on streets**

**Properties cleaned up; Not as much loitering; Require landlords to take care of their properties**

**Properties cleaned up; Indigents off the streets; Empty lots taken care of; Rosen Site cleaned up; Railroad property taken care of; Local supermarket added; Gangs and drugs moved out; Less welfare traffic; Maintain Main Street improvements; Drainage from Beaudry Park, Creek, Starr Road, and High School remedied; More police patrol of citizens on South Avenue, Union St, & Argyle St.; Price control on Real Estate**

**People taking proper care of their homes**

**People living here instead of “animals”**

**Paved streets and sidewalks; Properties updated and better cared for**

# **What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?**

**Parks cleaned up; Roads in better condition; Side streets have street lights**

**Older homes repaired; More trees**

**Old Wickwire building lot filled with something attractive; Yellow burned house removed; More small neighborhood businesses**

**No slumlords; South Avenue's houses fixed up; Better road conditions**

**Nice housing; Better streets and sidewalks; Fewer slumlords; More stores including one large store; Less drugs; Better people**

**New sidewalks; Electric and phone lines buried; No vacancies in the South Main Street Industrial Park**

**New housing; Less garbage laying around; Better pet control; Better code enforcement; New roads & sidewalks**

**Much better than it is now**

**More/better family housing**

**More stores; More jobs**

**More stores and businesses to walk to; Houses painted; A lively and safe neighborhood with little noise disturbance from the bars between Midnight and 2:30 am.**

**More owner-occupied houses; Landlords need to be accountable and retain tenants with honest and sound references; More code enforcement**



# **What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?**

**More green areas; Fewer saloons; Less loitering and congregating at street corners**

**More desirable**

**More businesses; More green spaces, including community garden projects ("Food in the Hood"); More opportunities for youth (midnight basketball in the summer); More community justice approaches - too many we locked up come back angry and dangerous**

**Make homeowners responsible for upkeeping their homes; Aldermen act on complaints**

**Like a fresh spring day; more modern**

**Less noise; Fewer dogs barking; No loud bar music; Fewer bar fights; Fewer cars speeding up and down the hill**

**Landlords who take care of their properties; Tenants who are made to keep their yards in order (uncluttered)**

**Landlords spend time and money to clean up their rental properties; Tenants have pride in their homes**

**Landlords and homeowners keeping houses painted, lawns mowed, etc.; No litter on the sidewalks; No groups of people hanging out on the sidewalks**

**Improvement in the appearance of homes; Noise level decreased; Safer streets free from undesirable characters; Fewer bars**

**Improved housing with residents who take pride in their residences; Fewer individuals "hanging out" on front steps; More organized events for residents in the neighborhood**

**Improved**

## **What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?**

**Houses kept up; lawns maintained; sidewalks improved; Proper porches on homes so that people don't have to sit out on the sidewalks**

**Homes in good repair; Trash being put in the right bins and not left out week after week; Being able to walk without stepping over trash**

**Homes and businesses maintained to invite people to move into this section of town.**

**Homes and buildings in better condition; Sidewalks maintained**

**Grocery Store in the Wickwire lot (Wilson Farms); Houses on South Main cleaned up and painted, especially the barn on South Main**

**Fixed up houses**

**Fewer people sitting on their porches drinking alcohol all day; Less domestic violence; Less police patrolling**

**Fewer people on welfare; Improve property values; Someone occupying the Dowzer Building; Fewer bars; Decreased loitering; South Ave. cleaned up**

**Cleaner; Safer place for children to play**

**Cleaner; More working residents; More caring landlords; Houses repaired; Roads paved**

**Cleaned up; no "crack" houses; no absentee landlords; no "bums" who lounge around all day looking for trouble; more police**

**Cleaned up with nicer housing; More well-to-do families living in the area; More parents playing with their children**

# What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?

Cleaned up so it doesn't have such a bad reputation

Cleaned up

Cleaned up

Clean; Proud to live here; Properties being cared for

Clean; More stores & businesses; Tenants and landlords held responsible for upkeep and condition of rental properties; Better public transportation

Clean with better neighbors - like it was 15 years ago.

Clean up run down houses, especially on South Main and South Ave.

Clean & Well kept; Fewer DSS porch sitters; No crack houses, No loitering

Better yards; Good neighbors; A place where children can play and not worry about who will try to harm them

Better housing conditions; Better roadside curb appeal; Small grocery store where old wickwire building used to be

Better

Better

## **What would you like your neighborhood to look like 5 to 10 years down the road?**

**Beautiful; A place where I am not ashamed to tell people where I live; Clean streets; A lot of grass; No loud neighbors sitting on their lawn all day drinking beer and hollering**

**A welcome site for visitors; More businesses that draw a diversity of people to come to our neighborhood; More young people who want to raise their families here**

**A stable, middle-class neighborhood with a less transient population; A place where I no longer have to worry about my children hearing curse words being screamed out in the street all hours of the day; A place where I no longer have to pick up broken beer bottles off my sidewalk on Saturday and Sunday mornings; A place where people don't steal the decorations off my house or trample the flowers that my children plant in our yard; A neighborhood that looks respectable where its citizens act respectful**

**A safe environment where a person can walk safely day or night like it was 30 years ago**

**A nice place to live; No drugs or drinking; No fighting; A better place for kids**

**A nice place to live for lower-income families without the drug dealing and fighting; Well-maintained area with landscaping; Safer for children**

**A neighborhood that is up-to-date and cared for**

**A decent neighborhood similar to Homer, NY**

**A clean, enjoyable place to live and work; Housing that is kept clean and maintained; No drugs or violence; To feel comfortable walking down sidewalks during the day and night**

**A clean residential area**

## Other Comments

Wonderful job on roads and lighting

With all of the construction here on the south end, with have gotten a lot of dust. South end residents should get a certain percentage taken off their City taxes to clean the outside of their houses.

We plan on moving within 5 to 7 years

We pay high taxes and some of the homes next to us are not taken care of.

Union Street and South Ave. are a disgrace to Cortland.

Too much welfare & not enough working class people. People just don't care anymore. The police don't help and the crime just keeps happening. Social Services is too easy and we the tax payers have to suffer. We pay for welfare while the receivers get drunk and live careless.

Too many people are loitering and not working - too much drugs, crime, drinking, etc.

This is not a neighborhood where I would want to raise my children

There should be more police, probation, and parole supervision when crime offenders are released. No more crack houses/ apartments! I am moving ASAP because it isn't safe here.

There are a lot of unemployed people who live here and do nothing good for the area.

The South Ave. area is out of control. It is becoming a baby New York City. It is really sad to see this because it could be so much better.

The sidewalks need to be replaced on the one side of Frederick Ave; Some of the homes need bushes and shrubs

The immediate area is very well kept, comprised of homeowners and renters who care about their properties and neighborhood. However, conditions several blocks north on Main Street are bordering on deplorable: houses in disrepair, negligent landlords, loitering. This generates an unsafe feeling.

## Other Comments

Tenants and landlords should be more responsible for the less visible garbage. Also, the City needs to enact an ordinance for spaying/neutering of cats & dogs

Student Housing makes it almost impossible for a family to find decent, affordable housing. The bus service should be expanded to evenings and weekends with more frequent trips to TC3 in Dryden.

Start a residency requirement for welfare in the City of Cortland

South Ave. is a terrible street to live on. I don't even like my guests to go down the street towards Main Street.

Some of my neighbors and I refer to Stewart Place as an "oasis" on the south side. I wish the larger neighborhood could develop a stronger sense of community and pride in our neighborhood.

Sidewalks, streets, & homes have looked terrible for quite some time; would like to see some grants in this area.

Put people on welfare to work by cleaning up Cortland - let them earn their money. South Ave. & South Main are where most of the people do not work. They do not have any respect for their properties.

Police need to patrol the South End diligently and control noise levels from vehicles leaving the bars at nighttime

Please make Cortland a happy place!

People need to report more code violations instead of turning their heads and looking the other way

Neighborhood bars need to be monitored for excessive noise

More news media to inform residents of what's going on would be helpful

Living on Denti Way is wonderful. Going through South Main Street to get to our street is like driving through a different world.

## Other Comments

Landlords should use better judgement when choosing tenants. My husband and I both work full-time and it is discouraging to see people who are drunk and do not have jobs. It is very depressing. My landlord screens his tenants and others should do the same.

Landlords should have rules for their tenants to keep trash where it belongs

Landlords need to take more interest and be accountable for their tenants. Union Street has been a mess!

Landlords need to keep their houses free of junk & trash

Jordan's Corner Store doesn't have anything anymore. Kids are left unattended and they do damage because their parents don't watch them. A lot of the houses have garbage and it smells.

It looks like a slum area. We have a great end of town with the High School, grade school, park, church, etc, so please clean it up.

Improvements being taken are wonderful - keep up the great work

I'm so pleased with the improvements that have been made (water lines, paving, lighting). I'd love to see these old victorian houses looking nice again, and would love to feel comfortable walking in the evening around the South End.

I take care of my property and wish others would do the same. People need to show more respect for their neighbors.

I recently had a child and I would love to move from this neighborhood because I feel it is unsafe.

I really hope the upcoming work on South Main Street will make a big difference in the neighborhood.

I love living on Pine Street. It's quiet and a good "old fashioned" neighborhood - people helping people and looking out for the kids. The houses are kept up and even the lower income families work hard to keep the outside of their homes nice.

I like living near Downtown. But, at night and even sometimes during the day, the ten minute walk is intimidating.

## Other Comments

I have been a resident and landlord long enough to know that I am speaking the truth from my heart

I grew up in this neighborhood and I left when I was 18. I came back after 30 years and I am appalled at the lack of code enforcement, lack of animal control, lack of jobs, and the amount of welfare in this City.

I consider my neighborhood to be Pine and Scammell which is a very nice area. However, South Ave. and some of the other streets are horrible. The landlords are slumlords and are only concerned with the "all mighty dollar".

I am a single working mother and I am tired of everything/everyone catering to the non-working people on welfare. If I want to take my daughter to a pool after work on a weekday I have to go all the way to Little York to find a pool that is open.

Fewer bars would help decrease weekend noise and wandering people on the streets. Bands are very noisy even during the daytime hours.

Drivers often use Union Street and Stewart Place as "race ways" between South Main and Owego Street - excessive speeds are dangerous. Absentee landlords are also a problem.

Don't tear down run-down houses just to build more low income housing

Domestic violence is a problem

Children live with parents who sell everything for drugs which leaves the children with nothing.

Bars should be closed or quiet by 11pm during the week

As elderly pass on and homes are sold as rental properties, they are being misused and landlords do not care.

Allow parking on streets overnight during the summer. A lot of improvements have been made on South Main, but some of the side streets and homes could be improved.

All of the South End is not bad.



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# BUSINESS/BUILDING OWNERS SURVEY RESULTS

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## **NOTE TO READER:**

**BUILDING AND BUSINESS OWNERS WERE SENT SURVEYS THAT CONTAINED SIMILAR OPEN-ENDED TYPE QUESTIONS. SINCE THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS EQUALLED 16, THE RESPONSES TO SIMILAR QUESTIONS ARE GROUPED AND SUMMARIZED HEREIN. OTHER RESPONSES ARE VERY SPECIFIC TO THE INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS, THEREFORE, INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES ARE NOT INCLUDED HEREIN.**

**CITY OF CORTLAND  
SOUTH MAIN STREET AREA  
BUSINESS OWNER SURVEY**

**Response 16/49 = 33%**

1. Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Type of Business: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Approximate square footage of your business space: \_\_\_\_\_
6. # of full time employees: \_\_\_\_\_ # of part time employees: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What hours are you open?:  
Mon \_\_\_\_\_ Tue \_\_\_\_\_ Wed \_\_\_\_\_  
Thu \_\_\_\_\_ Fri \_\_\_\_\_ Sat \_\_\_\_\_  
Sun \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there any private (not City) parking spaces specifically for your business?  
Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, how many spaces? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you **own** ☐ or **lease** ☐ your commercial space?
10. Is the current location adequate for your business's needs? Yes ☐ No ☐  
If **no**, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. From how far does your business draw its primary customer base? \_\_\_\_\_ miles
12. Other than the City of Cortland, what community provides your business with the greatest number of customers? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Please identify any desired improvements you would like/have planned for your commercial space: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you have any growth/expansion plans for your business? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. For each of the following items, please rank Cortland's South Main Street area on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "poor", and 5 being "very good". Please circle your answer.

	Poor				Very Good
TYPES/MIX OF SHOPS & SERVICES	1	2	3	4	5
APPEARANCE/AMBIANCE/CHARACTER	1	2	3	4	5
AVAILABILITY OF PARKING/TRAFFIC FLOW	1	2	3	4	5
SIDEWALKS/LIGHTING/PUBLIC AMENITIES	1	2	3	4	5
SAFETY/SECURITY	1	2	3	4	5
COST OF RENTING COMMERCIAL SPACE	1	2	3	4	5
SPECIAL EVENTS & PROMOTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
CRIME RATE	1	2	3	4	5
INTERACTION WITH NEIGHBORS	1	2	3	4	5

16. What do you believe are the greatest strengths of Cortland's South Main Street area?

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17. What do you believe are the greatest difficulties/weaknesses of doing business in Cortland's South Main Street area? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What improvements/initiatives (if any) do you feel are necessary to strengthen Cortland's South Main Street area? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What types of assistance/incentives/actions do you believe are needed to encourage commercial development in Cortland's South Main Street area? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Feel free to attach additional comments if you wish*

**CITY OF CORTLAND  
SOUTH MAIN STREET AREA  
BUILDING OWNER SURVEY**

1. Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Approximate square footage of your entire building: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Total number of floors: \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Commercial Building Occupants:**

Occupant or Business Name	What floor are they on?	Approximate square footage

\* Please include vacant units

6. **Residential Occupants:**

Total # of Units	Total # of Bedrooms	Any Vacancies? How many?

7. Are there any private parking spaces included with your building?      Yes ☐      No ☐

If yes, how many spaces? \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you indicated any vacancies in question 5 or 6: What improvements to your building do you believe would make the space more marketable? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Do you have any plans for making improvements to your property? If so, please describe.

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10. For each of the following items, please rank the South Main Street area on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “poor”, and 5 being “very good”. Please circle your answer.

	Poor				Very Good
THE TYPES/MIX OF SHOPS & SERVICES	1	2	3	4	5
APPEARANCE/AMBIANCE/CHARACTER	1	2	3	4	5
AVAILABILITY OF PARKING/TRAFFIC FLOW	1	2	3	4	5
SIDEWALKS/LIGHTING/PUBLIC AMENITIES	1	2	3	4	5
SAFETY/SECURITY	1	2	3	4	5
RENTAL RATES FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE	1	2	3	4	5
SPECIAL EVENTS & PROMOTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
CRIME RATE	1	2	3	4	5
INTERACTION WITH NEIGHBORS	1	2	3	4	5

11. What do you believe are the greatest strengths of Cortland’s South Main Street area?\_\_\_\_\_

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12. What do you believe are the greatest weaknesses of Cortland’s South Main Street area?\_\_\_\_\_

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13. What improvements (if any) do you feel are needed to strengthen Cortland’s South Main Street area?\_\_\_\_\_

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14. What types of assistance or incentives are needed to implement building or other improvements necessary to strengthen Cortland’s South Main Street area?\_\_\_\_\_

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15. Other Comments:\_\_\_\_\_

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## **BUILDING/BUSINESS OWNER SURVEY SUMMARY**

### **11. and 16. South Main Street's greatest strengths?**

Nearness to small businesses , the variety provided by the businesses, and the ability to walk to the businesses.  
Cohesiveness of neighborhood in fighting drug problems.  
Business properties in good condition.  
It does not have the same problem as Main Street does with being a one-way street.  
Closeness to Main Street, the high school, and the college.  
The ability to blend South Main Street with Main Street is appealing.  
There is huge potential which is getting better every day.  
The Housing Visions project.  
Nearness to Ithaca and I81.  
Lower rental rates.  
Great infrastructure to attract investors.  
Recent street and sidewalk improvements, plenty of parking.  
No strengths at this time.

### **12. and 17. Greatest difficulties of doing business in the South Main Street area?**

Bad reputation, lack of response to complaints, poor condition of housing.  
Drugs, crime, loitering, public drunkenness.  
Lack of street lighting.  
Bad tenants and too much trash.  
It's a low income "trap".  
Lack of government support: DBA, Chamber of Commerce, college, and community support.  
Area is considered "separate" from rest of Main Street. No one asks South Main Street businesses for their input.  
More room for improvement on the appearance of buildings.  
No public money available for businesses.

### **13. and 18. What is needed to strengthen the South Main Street area?**

Clean up the railroad tracks.  
Provide police foot and bicycle patrols; stiffer penalties for crimes, and a police sub-station.  
Offer once a month pick up of old appliances and furniture.  
Enforce codes and landlords' duties.  
Downtown promotions and communications to include South Main Street.

Renovate or tear down more buildings.  
Parking, facades, siding, and general building improvements.  
Tax incentives.  
More unique businesses.  
Grants, low interest loans.

**14. and 19. What types of assistance/incentives/ actions do you believe are necessary to encourage commercial development?**

Grocery store.  
Develop City owned utilities.  
Access to a better employees' insurance program.  
Financial assistance program for landlords who pay heat.  
More police interaction with the neighborhood.  
More promotions/events; inclusion in Downtown Partnership.  
Encourage cleaning and repairing buildings.  
Grants and loans which require owners to keep properties up to code and have a good appearance.  
Clear cut, upfront rules by the City.

**15. and 20. Other Comments**

We are on the right path with the street improvements, façade improvements, and clearing out/repairing “bad” buildings and homes.

We were not able to access any funds to improve our property.

It is wrong that South Main Street businesses are not considered a part of Main Street.

I would like to meet with any and all parties to discuss these issues.

The South End is slowly improving and we should be given incentives to keep it going.

Find a place in the South End where the YMCA could relocate.

We hope the strategic plan encourages small business and middle class housing.

The recent street, walk, and lighting improvements are major improvements.



Had intended to put up a 30,000 sq. ft. building but was discouraged because of local officials.

Thank you for realizing we need help to improve our area with beautification and to get rid of drug people.

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# DEFINITION OF SUBSTANDARD

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## EXTERIOR HOUSING CONDITIONS SURVEY RESULTS

Please note: The definition of substandard is the one used by the Governor's Office for Small Cities for the Community Development Block Grant Program:

**Standard** – Housing or rental units that are in standard condition, have no major structural defects, have adequate plumbing facilities, and their appearance does not create a blighting influence. This condition requires no more than observable, normal maintenance, dwelling units that have no deficiencies, or only slight observable deficiencies.

**Substandard** – Housing or rental units that have one or more major structural defects, but can still be repaired for a reasonable amount. The degree of substandard is either moderate or severe according to the number of major defects as shown below:

- Moderately Substandard – Housing or rental units that have less than three major defects and can be restored to a standard condition for a reasonable cost.
- Severely Substandard – Housing or rental units that have three or more major defects or at least one critical defect and can be restored to a standard condition for a reasonable cost.

**Dilapidated** – Units that are determined to be severely substandard to a degree requiring clearance or buildings which have three or more critical deficiencies that cannot be repaired to a standard condition for less than a reasonable amount. In these instances a local determination must be made concerning the economic feasibility and the public benefit of such projects.

### SOUTH END HOUSING CONDITIONS

TOTAL # INSPECTED	SEVERELY SUBSTANDARD	MODERATELY SUBSTANDARD	STANDARD	DILAPIDATED
257	97 38%	109 42%	49 19%	2 .8%

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# EVALUATION OF THE CONDITION OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

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## **EVALUATION OF THE CONDITION OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES BASED ON EXTERIOR OBSERVATIONS**

The commercial buildings in the South End Neighborhood were inspected on the exterior by employees of Thoma Development Consultants who are experienced building inspectors. For purposes of this Strategic Plan, the buildings were categorized as: Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor. Definitions follow:

**Excellent** – No repairs needed. No need for anything other than minimal cosmetic improvements.

**Good**- Minimal number of repairs or cosmetic improvements needed.

**Fair** – Needing repair to one or more secondary structural components (roofing, siding, exterior stairs) and in need of cosmetic improvements or repairs.

**Poor** – At least one of the primary structural components (foundation, exterior wall, or exterior roof structure) and one of the mechanical components (electric, windows and doors) appear to be in need of major repair. It is typical for buildings in poor condition to also need repairs to the roofing and siding, both secondary components, as well as needing cosmetic improvements.